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INTRODUCTION  
TO  
RURAL SOCIOLOGY

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*by*  
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REVISED EDITION

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The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.

—SAINT PAUL.

No other human occupation opens so wide a field for the profitable and agreeable combination of labor with cultivated thought as agriculture

—LINCOLN.

With reference either to individual or national welfare agriculture is of primary importance

—WASHINGTON

*These inscriptions, carefully chosen and verified, have been chiseled in the entablature of the main façade of the new Administration Building of the Department of Agriculture in Washington*



## PREFACE

All aspects of rural life in different parts of the United States cannot be traced in a detailed way within the limits of one volume. Such a presentation of the subject would furnish material sufficiently voluminous for several books. It has seemed advisable, therefore, to confine the contents of this book to the sociological interpretation of facts pertaining to rural life that appear to have significance in all sections of the country. Such a treatment, it is hoped, will make the book of interest to the general reader and also useful as a text in rural sociology. It represents the type of approach to the subject and arrangement of topics which have proved to be effective during the course of my ten years' experience in teaching students in both liberal arts and agricultural colleges. The references and bulletins listed at the end of each chapter are intended to assist the teacher in selecting supplementary material of special interest to the students whenever it seems advisable.

I am indebted to many persons for stimulation and guidance in studying rural sociology and it is impossible to appraise their influence definitely. I am aware that my interest was definitely focused on the subject while an undergraduate student in the classes of Professor O. F. Hall of Purdue University. This interest was continued under the direction of Professor G. H. Von Tungeln of Iowa State College. Dr. L. L. Bernard, formerly of the University of Minnesota, helped me to grasp the significance of scientific method and social theory in the interpretation of rural life, and Dr. J. D. Black of the same institution guided my thinking in the economic phases of the subject. Also, I am deeply indebted to Dr. C. J. Galpin of the United States Department of Agriculture, whose books, bulletins and mimeographed reports have helped me in many ways. Finally,

several years of pleasant association with colleagues at Michigan State College have aided my thinking in various phases of the subject. None of these persons, however, is responsible for the contents of this book and whatever imperfections it has should be charged to the writer.

I am grateful to the Library Staff at Michigan State College for the courteous and patient assistance in securing references and to my wife who typed nearly all the original copy of the manuscript.

C. R. H.

*East Lansing, Michigan*

*June, 1930.*

#### PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

The tremendous changes in rural life within the last few years and the rapid development of the science of rural sociology, especially in the field of research, have furnished the occasion for a revision of *Introduction to Rural Sociology*. A definite attempt has been made to take cognizance of these influences. Some chapters have been completely rewritten, others have been amplified, and three chapters, Chapters V, VI, and VII, are entirely new. As in the first edition, the purpose has been to interpret the social aspects of rural life from the standpoint of general sociology and, insofar as possible, to secure illustrative material from all parts of the United States. In order to facilitate the use of the book as a text, study questions have been included with each chapter and the reference material has been brought up-to-date.

C. R. H.

*East Lansing, Michigan*

*September, 1934.*

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PART I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION



## CHAPTER I

### THE CONTENT OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY

Herbert Spencer stated in one of his books that science "is simply a higher development of common knowledge, and that if science is repudiated all knowledge must be repudiated along with it"<sup>1</sup> This statement suggests in a concise manner what science is It is simply the tested and organized facts about particular problems which arrest the attention of people. A new science comes into existence whenever a group of phenomena confronting the mind of man are not or cannot be understood satisfactorily by disciplines or sciences antecedent to it When a group of such phenomena has arisen and has been named, the science appears, though it may be incomplete and inexact. These qualities are acquired later after numerous investigations are made and much thought is given to discovering the facts and developing generalizations pertaining to the subject

So it is with rural sociology As a separate discipline it is new, because conditions which caused its appearance have occurred recently Attention of people in the United States was focused definitely on the social aspects of rural life when the report of the Country Life Commission appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt, was published in 1911 Of course, many people had thought about rural social problems before that time The report showed in unmistakable terms that there were social problems in rural areas which needed careful study and analysis. It emphasized, especially, certain deficiencies in country life; namely, disregard for the inherent rights of land workers, highways, agricultural labor, health in the open country and woman's work on the farm.<sup>2</sup> It also contained some corrective measures

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, Chapter I A L Burt Company

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Commission on Country Life*, Sturgis and Walton Co, 1911, pages 59-106

that, in the language of the report, should be set in motion to correct these and other deficiencies that might be present.

This report could not consider all the problems pertaining to rural people, nor could it predict conditions which have arisen since the Commission made its study. It happens that new circumstances have created problems far more complex, seemingly, than those outlined in the report. Some of these may be noted here. They will indicate the scope as well as the significance of rural sociology.

The economic status of the farmer first caught the attention of thinkers. It has held a prominent place in published reports and speeches about rural life ever since. There is entire justification for this emphasis because many problems of an economic nature demand careful thought and study. Land ownership and tenancy are important considerations, and they have a vital influence on the welfare of rural people. If the owner-operator type of farm prevails, conditions are likely to be quite different from those under a system of absentee ownership. Problems of farm management have arisen. As soon as the day passed when the farmer and his family were largely self-sufficient, the farm had to be managed differently. There is a vast difference between farming primarily to produce one's own food and clothing and farming to grow products for a market. In one instance the management of the farm is a simple matter, requiring mainly the skill and strength necessary to produce crops and care for livestock. In the second case the farm is a business enterprise, and being a business enterprise, it is influenced by all the intricacies of the business world.

The development of the science of agriculture has also created new problems in farming. No longer can the farmer achieve maximum results from his efforts if he uses rule-of-thumb methods. He must know how to apply the results of scientific investigations at agricultural experiment stations to his own farm. Only an intelligent farmer can do this successfully. The advance of scientific agriculture has shown in an unquestioned manner that the human element in agricultural production plays an important rôle. A science of agriculture cannot be used effectively

by a farmer with an unscientific attitude. It requires a high quality farmer, for example, to care for high producing dairy cows, or to grow fine fruits. An ignorant man cannot secure the greatest benefits from, or even utilize, some of the farm practices modern science has shown to be useful.

In addition to questions involved in producing farm products, marketing problems have demanded consideration. Production of plants and animals on the farm is only the initial step in supplying food products to consumers. Farms are scattered, and they produce products in relatively small amounts which vary in quality. The task of assembling, grading and storing them is a big one. Efficient handling of farm products after they are produced may make a difference between profit and loss for the farmer. Co-operative marketing movements represent efforts on the part of farmers to solve these problems as far as possible, but much work and organization still remain to be done.

Economic questions have loomed so large in the minds of farmers and those who think about rural problems that they have seemed all-important. They have been responsible for a theory, now rapidly losing ground, that if the farmer could only settle his economic problems—in other words, if he could make more money—all his social problems would be solved as a matter of course. But enticing as this argument may seem, it is not true. Ample proof of it may be observed on every hand when farmers fail to attain a higher standard of living as their income increases. President Theodore Roosevelt in his letter of introduction to the *Report of the Commission on Country Life* stated the well-known phrase, that there are three aims of farming—"better farm practice, better farm business and better living on the farm"<sup>3</sup>. The first two are a means to the third, and unless farmers achieve the third aim, they fail in their endeavors. This fact has not been appreciated fully by farmers or farm leaders, even after hundreds of farmers have paid for their farms, accumulated a bank account, and then have lowered their standard of living by investing again in more land. The writer has had the opportunity in connection with research work

<sup>3</sup> *The 60th Congress, Senate Document, No. 705.*

to visit several hundred farm families and has seen over and over again the folly of an over-emphasis on better farming and better farm business and an under-emphasis on activities and interests intended to produce better living on the farm. Unimproved houses, over-worked housewives, under-privileged children, and money-minded, wealth-grasping farmers are frequently the baneful results of farming when the quality of living is not taken into account.

So it has happened that wealth-getting activities alone create neither a wholesome farm life nor a rural civilization to which a nation can point with pride. Questions of social well-being must be taken into account. They cannot supplant other questions, but rather must be added to them. Economic matters are always important, but to consider them alone is simply to leave the task unfinished. Economic programs have meaning and are successful only to the extent that they help people to become more efficient and socially intelligent citizens. Unless programs and policies of an economic nature do this, they will sooner or later defeat their own purpose.

However, economic problems are not the only ones that have puzzled the minds of rural leaders since, or even before, the appearance of the *Report of the Commission on Country Life*. Rural depopulation was observed with much concern and the slogan, "Keep the boy on the farm", became almost a battle cry for a certain class of rural enthusiasts who saw nothing but decay and final destruction of rural society in the cityward migration of farm youth. Depopulation and cityward migration were first evident in the New England states. They later spread to other parts of the country and have persisted. For example, a press release of the United States Department of Agriculture in 1929 shows that every geographical division in the United States lost in rural population during the preceding year.

This trend was reversed during the three subsequent years when there was such widespread unemployment in urban centers. However, by 1933 even the net gain of the farm population showed a decrease from 1,001,000 to 267,000. Whether or not



the trend toward urbanization will continue as the severity of the depression abates is a matter of prophecy. It may not reach the proportions of former years, as other problems regarding the population will doubtless arise.

Associated with the decline of rural population was also evidence that certain institutions in rural areas, particularly the church and the school, were not holding their place of influence in the lives of farm folks. The one-room district school with an inexperienced teacher seemed wholly incapable of directing the educational activities of the people. A decline of many rural churches was unquestionably evident. The old-time recreational activities, too, seemed to be disappearing, and commercialized amusements were absorbing an increasing amount of the time and money that people had.

Furthermore, a growing consciousness of the differences between urban and rural people became evident. Modern methods of transportation and communication brought the rural and urban parts of society into closer relationship with each other. The farmer came to town more frequently after he purchased an automobile, and the town or city resident went more frequently to the country. Such intermingling between urban and rural people made comparisons between the two modes of life unavoidable, and the comparisons were usually disadvantageous to the country. It is a curious fact that the most vital and valuable aspects of country life are not easily seen or appreciated. One must live in the country to appreciate it fully, while many city advantages are obvious. But taking conditions as they appeared to observers, country life as a mode of living seemed inferior to city life in many important respects. Neither the country nor the city presented a static condition. Yet in the advance toward modern schools, churches, wealth, leisure, and cultural attainments, the city seemed to be far ahead. All these comparisons and facts served to reinforce a philosophy, current since medieval times, that the town or city mode of life was superior to that of the country.

Yet persons who thought deeply about these questions were not ready to accept the conclusions just indicated. They saw

in country life more than dirt, drudgery and deprivation. To them, it possessed unquestioned values and offered opportunity for a mode of life highly desirable from the standpoint of rural people and of the nation. In the country there was opportunity for health, quietness, independence, and genuine neighborliness. It was a suitable place in which enduring qualities of character and social value could be nurtured. Family life, it was observed, might be conserved and strengthened in rural areas, but the task of maintaining it in the city seemed very difficult indeed, from many points of view. And so, conflicting policies about rural life arose. Persons who believed it was inferior to urban life pursued a policy of what might be called urbanization. To them, rural life was improved to the extent that it became like urban life. Others, who saw no value in urbanization, favored a policy of ruralism. They contended that country life should remain as independent and as free from urban influences as possible. A third policy which emerged is one somewhat between these two extremes. It recognizes values in both urban and rural life and favors a policy of integration, in so far as it is feasible and practical. Many advantages of city life may be brought to the country and, on the other hand, there are some values in country life which might be emphasized in the city, albeit in a different way. Each of these policies has its adherents, although it seems evident now that the last named one is holding the predominant place in the thoughts of people who try to see things as they are.

*Rural Sociology*—Problems of the sort outlined in the previous paragraphs occurred again and again in the public press and in farmers' meetings. Some systematization and organization of the facts about them were needed. So "rural sociology" developed as the name of the subject under which these problems could be considered. Briefly stated, rural sociology may be defined as a science dealing with the social conditions of rural people, from the standpoint of their own well-being and its influence on the nation as a whole. The content of the subject must be questions of a social nature that affect rural people and their relationships to other groups in the population.

Several approaches may be made to this subject. There is first

the so-called formal approach. Certain terms are sought, which seem to be comprehensive in their scope, and all facts, figures and ideas are marshaled under these terms. The *Sociology of Rural Life* by H. B. Hawthorn represents an attempt of this kind. He used the term "socialization" as the key to unlock the treasure house of sociological information about rural life. A similar approach is found, nominally at least, in *Elements of Rural Sociology* by N. L. Sims. This author writes in his preface, "Briefly stated, society is thought of in terms of energy manifest organically, materially and culturally in a unity which we call the human group"<sup>4</sup>. A second method of studying rural life is to compare it with urban life. *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, by Sorokin and Zimmerman represents the study of rural life from this angle. Such a work really might be called comparative sociology. The book by Dr. Sims also has much of the comparative method in it. Still a third way to study rural sociology is to consider the problems and questions pertaining to rural life, not in the framework of formal categories, but rather by using terms more or less current in the language and thought of sociologists and of rural people as well. The chapter titles of several books indicate that this method is used. *Rural Sociology* by C. C. Taylor and *Rural Sociology* by A. W. Hayes are particularly outstanding in this respect.

The method he uses to discover, explain and correlate the facts about rural life is largely a matter of preference on the part of any author. The main objective is accuracy of analysis and clearness of presentation. Probably emphasis from several approaches is valuable, because it will enable students of rural life to see the phenomena pertaining to it from several points of view. In time suitable categories or terms will emerge which will be effective tools for the science, just as suitable terms have arisen in other sciences. The process is never complete, and too much concern about the terms used is a waste of effort. Changes in rural social relationships are occurring constantly. Usually the terms extant are sufficient to explain them, but sometimes a new one may need to be coined. From the standpoint of

<sup>4</sup>N. L. Sims, *Elements of Rural Sociology*, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., preface

practical considerations in teaching the subject, it appears that the approach through familiar terms is preferable. A limited study of this point shows that twenty-four outlines for courses in rural sociology, in as many institutions, had topical headings such as: rural church, rural school, rural population, etc., and the content of the subject was presented under these and similar titles<sup>5</sup> If formal, unfamiliar terms are used, students must be made acquainted with them as well as with the factual material considered under each one.

There has been much discussion, especially in rural sociology text books, as to whether rural sociology is a branch of general sociology, and whether it is an applied science or not. These are matters which primarily concern the social theorist, although the questions are not idle ones. It is well to know where a subject belongs in its relation to the various sciences. If general sociology is defined as the science of social relationships considered abstractly, then certainly rural sociology is a branch of that general science. But rural sociology, as the present writer conceives it, is not entirely a consideration of abstract relationships. Practical problems come within its purview. These problems are integrated and explained, however, by use of the principles and concepts developed in abstract social science whenever possible. Thus it would seem that rural sociology is an applied science, because, as has been pointed out elsewhere, an applied science is a classification of knowledge in a manner which makes it useful for purposes of technology<sup>6</sup> While it is logical to think of rural sociology as an applied science, there is an important distinction between it and rural social reform. The latter subject includes definite programs of improvement, to be attained usually through legislation. In social reform movements, rural sociology is only one of the many sciences that may be used to formulate programs. It may even be the chief one. But its purpose is to explain facts as they are and then,

<sup>5</sup> C. R. Hoffer, *The Status of Rural Sociology in Colleges and Universities*, Publications of the American Sociological Society, Vol. XXII, page 248.

<sup>6</sup> L. L. Bernard, *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, Henry Holt and Co., page 5

on the basis of the facts, apply or develop sociological theories that will assist people to see the conditions and trends of rural life in an abstract manner. Only in this way can they comprehend them. The application of these facts and theories in definite programs falls in the field of social reform.

It follows from the foregoing statements that the subject matter of rural sociology is very comprehensive. All phenomena have social significance to a greater or less degree and it is the task of rural sociology to consider them in their relative importance. No social science has a monopoly on the phenomena which it treats. Important social facts may be studied through many social sciences, because the events may be viewed from many different angles. To illustrate, tenancy is a well-known fact in rural life. No person would be so unwise as to contend that tenancy is wholly an economic phenomenon, or that it is wholly a social one. As a matter of fact, it is important from the standpoint of rural economics, rural sociology, and possibly other sciences. This topic may be dealt with through any of these sciences—provided always that the research worker or writer considers it from the standpoint of his specialty. The same data may be used by workers in different sciences, if necessary. Chaos and inconsistency arise only when a writer or research worker departs from his legitimate point of view and attempts to generalize and interpret data from the standpoint of a science that he does not thoroughly understand.

The chapters which follow represent an attempt to consider rural life *from the standpoint of the sociologist*. Certain chapter headings, such as land policies, farm management, and others, which have appeared in some rural sociology text books, are not found in this volume. It is the opinion of the writer that these are primarily economic concepts and that it is more advantageous to treat the social aspects of these phenomena under concepts that are more definitely sociological. When one studies rural social life intensively, it becomes apparent that all the facts pertaining to it cannot be condensed in a single volume. Circumstances are too diverse. Rural life differs in each region of the country and, in fact, in each community. Conditions in

the South are unlike those that prevail in the North. Agriculture and rural life are much different in the East than they are in the West. To treat in detail the major variations that occur requires the work of many persons. The rural church, for instance, has different problems in different areas. The Institute of Social and Religious Research has done a worthy task in making available to people the facts about the rural church in various regions.<sup>7</sup> It is to be hoped that other aspects of rural life will be studied as intensively.

The content of this book does not represent an attempt, therefore, to treat in detail the variations which occur in different regions. Rather, it is an attempt to set forth the general facts of sociological significance and the sociological principles pertaining to rural life that seem to have general application. Teachers may find it profitable to supplement the material included here with detailed factual studies of rural life in the area of particular interest to the students. Unfortunately, such studies are not available in all parts of the country. Some agricultural experiment stations have been tardy in promoting research work in the social aspects of rural life, and a supply of authentic information about it in each state is not available. The carefully selected list of references and bulletins given at the end of each chapter refers to pertinent supplementary material, however.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does the term *science* mean?
2. When does a new science come into existence?
3. Enumerate the conditions which contributed to the development of rural sociology.
4. Define *rural sociology*.
5. Enumerate the various approaches to the study of rural sociology.
6. How has the development of agricultural science contributed to an interest in rural life?
7. What aspects of rural life were emphasized in the *Report of the Commission on Country Life*?
8. Explain how the growth of cities has contributed to an interest in rural life.

<sup>7</sup> Reference to these studies is given in the chapter on the rural church.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE OCCUPATIONAL INFLUENCES OF FARMING

In a subsequent chapter it will be noted that there are several occupations in rural areas. The predominant one, however, is farming. Its influences are very great on the farm population itself, and to a greater or lesser degree it affects the attitudes of other persons who live in the rural environment. It is important, therefore, in a study of the rural population to consider in a fairly detailed way the nature or characteristics of farming, especially in regard to the effects which these have on the personality of farmers and the social organizations of rural people.

It should be stated at once that the term "farm" and "farmer" are very inclusive. For census purposes a farm is all the land which is directly farmed by one person either by his own labor alone or with the assistance of members of his household or hired employees.<sup>1</sup> Tracts of land of less than three acres were not counted as farms unless the agricultural products in 1929 were valued at \$250 or more. According to this classification there were reported on April 1, 1930, 6,288,648 farms. They were distributed by size in the following way.

SIZE OF FARM	NUMBER OF FARMS	PER CENT OF INCREASE (OR DECREASE)
Under 3 acres	43,007	111.5
3-9 acres	315,497	17.5
10-19 acres	559,617	10.2
20-49 acres	1,440,388	-4.2
50-99 acres	1,374,965	-6.8
100-174 acres	1,342,927	-7.4
175-259 acres	520,593	-1.9
260-499 acres	451,338	-5.1
500-999 acres	159,696	6.6
1000-4999 acres	71,321	18.8
5000 acres and over	9,299	25.9

<sup>1</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol II, page 2, Agriculture



It is evident merely from the standpoint of size that a great diversity exists, and it is obvious that size is a fairly good indication of numerous other variations, such as type of farming and use of machinery. A farm may represent an investment of only a few hundred dollars or an investment of several thousand. The machinery may be a few hand tools or it may include a modern tractor and a combine. A farm under 100 acres differs as greatly from one containing 1,000 acres as a farm of 10 acres differs from a farm containing 100 acres. The percentages in the figures just given indicate that changes are occurring in regard to size of farm. The general trend is for the smaller farms—those under 20 acres—and for very large farms to increase in number. The middle or medium-sized farms are declining somewhat, though there is no indication that they are disappearing. These are the so-called “family-sized farms” in the sense that the farm is large enough to support a family and yet small enough so that practically all of the necessary labor may be done by the farmer and his family.

Most of the small farms are found around cities and industrial centers. They may be truck farms or farms owned by persons who spend part of their time in employment off the farm. Some of these persons are urban workers. The recent interest which the Federal Government has stimulated in the small subsistence farmstead will probably contribute to a greater increase in small farms during the next few decades. A subsistence homestead is defined as a plot of ground from one to five acres in size, depending upon the fertility of the soil, on which a family can raise vegetables, some fruit and, under conditions where land is cheap, keep poultry, a pig or two and a cow. The large farms consist of estates and various combinations of farms which have resulted from mortgage foreclosures and the like. The fear has often been expressed that large farms owned by corporations would prove so efficient that they would gradually supplant the family-sized farm. Should this occur, it follows that rural life would lose its present characteristics of family unity and stability. Then families might live in groups, as they now do in France and in other European countries, instead of on separate farmsteads.

However, such evidence as is now available does not indicate that these changes will be likely to occur. It appears that no system of operating a farm can equal in efficiency the farm-family system in an area where diversified agriculture is practiced. Then, even though large companies or corporations do own several thousand acres of land, it is still possible for families to live on the various tracts as tenant families. But referring again to the figures just given, it is clear that the bulk of farms in the United States may be classed as family-sized farms.

Generally speaking the smaller the farm, the more intensive will be the farming methods. Certainly much machinery cannot be used on a small farm, although scientific practices may be followed.

Farms vary also in the kind of crops produced. Climate and soil-fertility as well as market demands are determining factors in this respect. Differences are most noticeable when different regions in the United States are compared. There is cotton growing in the South, general farming in the Middle West, fruit growing in California, etc. In addition to these differences, the choice made by farmers in the same locality regarding the crops to be grown or the livestock kept varies greatly. The effect of these and other differences are important, not only because they influence the personality of the farmer, but also because such differences enhance the difficulties which arise when farmers attempt to organize to promote their own welfare.

Some idea of the variety of farms is shown by the census classification which follows.<sup>2</sup>

ALL TYPES	6,288,648
General	1,044,266
Cash grain	454,726
Cotton	1,640,025
Fruit	431,379
Truck	84,561
Dairy	604,837
Animal Specialty	479,042
Stock Ranch	71,000
Poultry	166,517

<sup>2</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol III, Part I, Agriculture.

Self Sufficiency	498,019
Abnormal	384,092
Institution or Country estate	5,806
Part time	339,207
Boarding and lodging	6,201
Forest Product	20,106
Horse farm, feed lot or live- stock dealer	12,772
Unclassified	288,766

*Purposes of Farming*—It is a significant fact that a farmer may consider his activities in producing animals and crops as a business, as a way of life, or as a combination of the two. In the early history of this country, farming certainly was more nearly a way of life than a business, because the chief objective of farming was to produce enough food and other products to provide for the needs of the family. Production for a market received only secondary consideration. When farming is carried on as a means of obtaining the necessities of life rather than for profit, rural life tends to develop characteristics of contentment and neighborliness which give stability and a certain essence of nobility to the population. It was under such conditions that the foundations of our rural culture were laid. If production for a market is the primary emphasis in farming, then the farm becomes a business enterprise, and the advantages of living in the country receive secondary consideration. During the last half century or longer this objective of farming has been in the ascendancy. Some persons visualized the farm as a miniature factory producing numerous products for market. But the enterprise never seemed quite like a factory, and it must be admitted that farming from this point of view has not been entirely successful. The returns from farming have never been large in comparison to the amount invested. Often there are no profits at all. Certainly in recent years this has been true, for the changes in business conditions and the demand for farm products since the close of the World War have drastically reduced the prices of agricultural commodities. Farm prices have

been exceptionally low, and whether or not farmers consciously chose to do so, they have shifted back somewhat to farming as a means of subsistence. When wheat, which in normal times is worth a dollar, brings only 51 cents per bushel, and when commodity prices are at the pre-war level, the farmer has no choice, aside from trying to improve the price and market situation, except to produce all that he possibly can for home use.

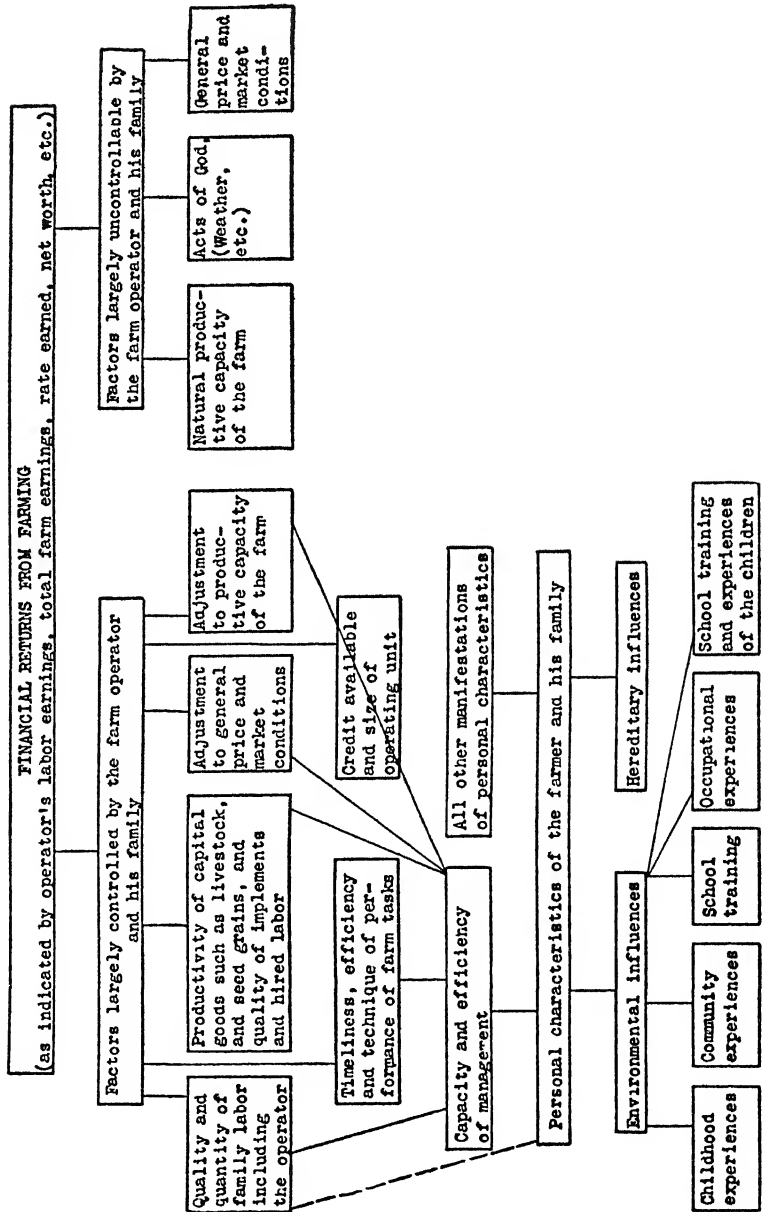
Just what objective the farmers of the United States will emphasize in the near future is a matter of prophecy. Doubtless some will emphasize one objective; others another. A significant number, possibly a majority, will be motivated by the profit motive merely to the extent of being efficient in what they produce. But their major purpose will be to live quietly and comfortably with only a moderate emphasis on the accumulation of wealth. One conclusion from a recent study of the human factor in the returns in farming seems to substantiate this view. The report reads, "Some knowingly sacrifice pecuniary gains to attain certain other objectives. It seems that many of the farmers on the small farms definitely preferred to have their income-gaining possibilities limited by a small operating unit rather than give up some of the leisure and freedom from care associated with the small farm"<sup>3</sup> It is also true that some farmers do not have the ability to manage a large farm or else do not care for the type of work required. A farmer may be very successful in growing fruits and vegetables but entirely unsuccessful as wheat grower or stock raiser. Of course it is necessary, if social progress is to be achieved, that the farmers choosing to operate the smaller farms employ what additional time they may have constructively. If they idle their time away or "loaf" around in a nearby store, no great benefit will be derived. It is at this point where training and experience in community leadership is essential, for a person so trained will be interested in the improvement of life in his own community and rural life in general.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Wilcox, Andrew Boss and George A. Pond—*Relation of Variations in the Human Factor to Financial Returns in Farming*, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 288, p. 41

*Factors Determining Success in Agriculture*—It is a significant fact that the influences determining the profits in agriculture are numerous and inter-related. Some idea of their extent and inter-relationship may be gained from the diagram on page 20.

Possibly other factors could be added, and it might be advisable to give greater emphasis to certain ones—environmental influences, for instance. Certainly the diagram shows that numerous influences are important. This diagram indicates, too, that it is almost impossible to standardize farming to any considerable extent; so many influences are uncontrollable and unpredictable. It is a significant fact that in farming the farmer performs both the rôle of a manager, or entrepreneur, and that of a laborer. Both functions are indispensable. Work alone will not make a farmer successful, poor management might destroy all the benefits of his hard labor. This has frequently happened, as a matter of fact, especially in recent years when many factors besides the ability to do manual labor have increased in importance. Among the more important influences which determine the success of a farmer is the application of science.

*Use of Science in Agriculture*—Farming is an extractive industry. Agricultural products must be secured directly or indirectly from the soil. A farmer is obliged to work with nature in the production of plants and animals. In fact, no other industry compares with farming to the extent that it is influenced by nature. Before the advent of science, the farmer took a passive attitude toward the part played by nature. He could not control its processes. Rather he was influenced and dominated by them. As science developed and was applied to agriculture, the up-to-date farmer learned to control and manipulate the forces of nature to a certain extent. Now, nature is more of a friend than a foe. It would be difficult to estimate what scientific knowledge has done for a man who understands its applications to agriculture and who thus can get a glimpse of its future possibilities. Science broadens the farmer's mental horizon and brings him face to face with the most fundamental facts of life. An urban newspaper recently described the champion corn



grower of America with the following words. "Well-groomed, alert, business-like, devoted to scientific methods"

Several years ago Dr C. J. Galpin raised the question "Can science capture farming?"<sup>4</sup> At that time it was, indeed, a real question. It seemed as if the crust of tradition and custom might be so great that science could not break it. The question is not so serious today, for gradually many scientific truths and practices are being adopted by farmers. And Dr. Galpin, ten years later, made the prediction that science, having entered the farming process, will sooner or later permeate the farmer's social relationships also.<sup>5</sup> But science does not entirely predominate in the farming industry today. A fund of scientific knowledge applicable to all farming processes has not yet been developed. Sometimes practices which are thoroughly scientific cannot be immediately utilized with profit on some farms. Moreover, many farmers are loath to give up the customary practices for the newer ones. Dr N. L. Sims observes that there are three levels in the agricultural art—the magical or antiquated, the customary or practical, and the scientific.<sup>6</sup> Today the first level is passing away, the last one is being adopted, the second predominates. The implications of this change are far-reaching.<sup>7</sup> If the prediction is true, that the farmer will use science in his social relationships as he is now beginning to do in his farming operations, a new era in farm life may be near at hand. The farm population is greatly handicapped at present by its tardiness in applying social science to its social problems. But the application of social science cannot be delayed much longer if the profits of physical science are to be realized.

*Use of Machinery*—Not only has farming tended to become more scientific in recent years, but it has also become more

<sup>4</sup> C. J. Galpin, *Rural Life*, D. Appleton-Century Co., 1918, page 47.

<sup>5</sup> C. J. Galpin, *Science in Rural Human Relationships*, Proceedings of the Tenth and Eleventh Country Life Conferences, University of Chicago Press, pages 18-21.

<sup>6</sup> N. L. Sims, *Elements of Rural Sociology (Revised Edition)*, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., page 340.

<sup>7</sup> The economic effects of it are sketched by Dr E. G. Nourse in a paper entitled *The Outlook for Agriculture*, Journal of Farm Economics, Vol. IX, January, 1927.

mechanical. In pioneer times a large amount of farm work had to be done by hand. A wagon, plow, harrow, double-shovel cultivator, and hand tools, constituted the bulk of mechanical equipment that the farmer used. Today there are few types of farm work that cannot be done wholly or in part by machinery. It has been estimated that about 2,500 horse-power-hours per year are used on the average farm.<sup>8</sup> If the farmer can secure capital to purchase modern machinery, its continued use on the farm seems assured in all kinds of farm work excepting the most complex operations. With machinery, farming ceases to be merely muscular activity. The influence of this change is a subtle, though important, one. When machinery is used, it becomes increasingly difficult for men without training or with inferior ability to achieve success as farmers. Work that is relatively simple may be performed by persons who lack ability or experience, but the more intricate tasks and the management of the farm will have to be done by capable and experienced persons. There has not been a distinct and permanent agricultural labor class employed in this country, although at present some circumstances indicate that it may develop. Men with enough ability and wealth may become farm owners or operators and hire other persons to do the routine hand work.

The increased use of machinery on the farm is socially significant in another way. When a machine does work previously performed by hand, there is time and energy left for other purposes. The farmer may use this time and energy to do more work, or he may take a little more leisure. At present the average farmer follows both courses to a certain extent. He does more work and also takes a little more recreation. If the leisure time is wisely used, it can be a great aid to the enrichment of the life and culture of farm people. On the other hand, if used unwisely it may prove to be the farmer's downfall. The responsibility for directing the utilization of this time and energy into socially beneficial ways rests with the various institutions and

<sup>8</sup> *An Appraisal of Power on Farms in the United States*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin 1348, page 3



social organizations in rural communities. It is a major problem in recreation.

*Influence of Small Units of Production*—Another characteristic of farming is the fact that the unit of production, that is the farm, is small in comparison with producing units in many other industries. Even a farm of one hundred and twenty acres, equipped with good buildings, machinery and livestock, represents an investment perhaps of only twenty to thirty thousand dollars. The investment in a factory, store, or many other kinds of businesses, as a rule, greatly exceeds this amount. Moreover, the producing units in agriculture are widely scattered. Farms are found wherever agriculture is profitable. As a class, farmers are so widely scattered that comparatively few of them ever meet in a face-to-face way at any given time. This fact partially explains their tardiness in learning the art of co-operation and organization. Only recently have the techniques of indirect representation been utilized by farmers to secure an expression of their views and problems.

Because the American farmer lives on his land, rather than in a hamlet or village, as is the case in some European countries, he and his family are somewhat isolated from other rural residents. Whether this isolation is serious or not depends upon the extent to which the family takes advantage of the opportunities now available for contacts. Telephones, radios and automobiles can make the proverbial isolation of the farm family seem like a myth. Yet the fact remains that the farm group is relatively isolated from other occupational groups. Farmers meet and talk with farm people more frequently than with persons in other occupations. Whatever attitudes the environment of the farm produces are intensified because of this fact. The effects of such isolation can be observed in the attitudes of farmers toward town and city folks. They do not understand city ways and are apt to be ill at ease when in company with urban people. Conflicts between the rural and urban parts of the population originate in circumstances such as these. Each group sees the same phenomena from its particular point of view. Harmony between them cannot be assured until both rural and urban

people understand each other well enough to appreciate their interdependencies

*Influence of Farm Work*—The fact that the farmer must perform many different kinds of labor influences his personality to some extent. Farm work is very diverse. It is necessary to perform dozens, possibly hundreds, of different tasks in the course of a year's time. Unless a farmer develops a certain amount of skill and self-reliance in performing them, he cannot be successful. Many of these tasks can be learned only by experience. It has been said in various places that farm work and the farm environment tend to make a farmer individualistic. Probably this is true to some extent, but there is danger of mistaking self-reliance for individualism. Farmers are self-reliant, but they are not always individualistic. The co-operative movement has grown rapidly in recent years and is a manifestation of the farmer's willingness to work with his neighbors. By 1930 it is reported that sales were made through co-operative associations from 691,895 farms and purchases from 410,914 farms.<sup>9</sup> There has always been a certain amount of mutual aid and neighborliness among farm people. Occasionally they have shown a high degree of socialization.

*Influences on the Family*—Farming is singularly dependent upon family life. Without the aid of a family, or at least without the services of a housekeeper, it is almost impossible for a man to follow the occupation of farming. There are few bachelor farmers. The inconvenience and impracticability of getting meals and lodging at places other than the farm are quite obvious. Moreover, someone needs to be near the farmstead most of the time, as emergencies may arise. But there are other ways in which a family is of value in the operation of the farm. It is common practice for the women and children to help with the farm work. The amount of this help varies with different families and with different types of farming. Several years ago the value of this labor expressed in terms of money was estimated to be from one hundred to five hundred dollars per

<sup>9</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. V, Part I, p. 51, Agriculture

family<sup>10</sup> However, such labor is usually not paid for in cash. The farm business is a family enterprise; each member makes his or her contribution to its success. A detailed study of the work performed by members of the family has recently been made by the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station. Detailed records were kept in connection with farm management studies over a period of five years. The results showed that, of the total number of work hours spent on these farms, 14.5% were contributed by the wives and by boys and girls under 19 years of age.<sup>11</sup> This work comprised taking care of dairy utensils, on the part of the wife especially, general dairy work, help in poultry raising, care of livestock, and other work. Another study, also made by this experiment station, points out that some farm wives assisted their husbands, aside from chores, in planning, by taking an active interest in and understanding the many problems, by making adjustments in the farm budget, and in many other ways. It is significant also that there was fairly high positive relationship between the labor income of the farm operator and amount of co-operation offered by the wife.<sup>12</sup>

Since the inter-relationship between the farm business and family life is so close, whatever effects the destiny of one is likely to affect the other also. Many times needed expenditures for the family are sacrificed in order to protect or promote the farming enterprise. Children may not be sent to school during busy seasons of the year if they are needed on the farm. The school attendance laws in some agricultural states include a special provision enabling children to stay out of school so that they can help with farm work. One reason why more farm boys do not attend high school or college is the fact that they cannot be released from farm work. The 1930 census lists a total of 975,568 children 10 to 17 years of age as gainfully employed in agriculture. The problem of using their labor, as well as that

<sup>10</sup> *Yearbook*, United States Department of Agriculture, 1925, Table 625

<sup>11</sup> Lucy A. Studley, *Relationship of the Farm Home to the Farm Business*, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 279, p. 14

<sup>12</sup> Walter Wilcox, Andrew Boss, and George A. Pond, *Relation of Variations in the Human Factor to Financial Returns in Farming*, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 288, pages 10, 11

of children not so classified, without retarding their physical and educational development is one that social welfare leaders and farmers must face.

*Farming Encourages Frugality*—The returns or profits from the average farm are not large. A good farmer can make a comfortable and modest living for himself and family, but he is not likely to become wealthy from the income of his farm. Profits derived from investments in land may supplement the farm income to some extent. Yet most farmers do not accumulate a large amount of wealth. Many of them who are handicapped in one way or another do well to make a living. Then the income from farming is irregular, particularly if it is a specialized type. Money available at one season of the year must be spread over other seasons until income is again forthcoming. Moreover, financial returns from investments or labor are not always certain, for climatic conditions, insect pests, or price fluctuations, may create a loss instead of profits. Also the farm offers almost unlimited opportunity for re-investment of profits back into the farming business. Any amount varying from the price of a dozen eggs for hatching purposes to the sum necessary for purchasing an additional piece of land can be used. This circumstance encourages economy and the investment of money in ways that will bring a financial return. A farmer receives the commendation of his neighbors and friends when he builds a barn, buys more land, or otherwise increases his economic status. Expenditures that do not show promise of yielding a monetary reward are not equally encouraged. All of these influences tend to make farmers frugal. Within reason, frugality is highly commendable, but if carried to extremes it leads to unwise economy. The results of extreme frugality can be observed every day—when people refuse to provide adequate educational and health facilities for themselves and their children, to modernize their houses, and to make sufficient expenditures for cultural advancement in order to obtain the minimum requisites of an enjoyable life.

*Influences of Different Types of Farming*—Certain characteristic influences occur in all types of farming. The principal ones

have been noted. In addition to these, each particular type of farming apparently affects the personality and social organization of the people who are engaged in it. Extensive studies have not been made of different types of farming from this point of view, consequently only general statements may be given regarding them<sup>13</sup>

Dairy farming seems to be especially outstanding in its influence. It demands men who are fitted by training and experience. The modern high-producing cow is a remarkable product of scientific care and breeding. But a poor dairyman cannot get maximum results with such animals, even though they are high producers; for best results he must be a good dairyman. On dairy farms the labor is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year, as is also the income. Social organizations can carry on their activities without serious interruptions due to busy seasons or fluctuations of income. This type of farming promotes stable habits on the part of those engaged in it and is favorable to the development of community institutions. It facilitates frequent contacts among farmers and encourages the formation of co-operative activities. Some of the first co-operative marketing associations to be organized in the United States handled dairy products.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, it has been suggested that certain disadvantages may exist because dairying is too confining and because the income, even though regular, is not large. The fact remains, however, that some of the most progressive communities in the United States are those where dairying is the chief industry.

Grain farming, that is farming where grain is the principal crop raised, produces another set of circumstances. The farms are usually larger and the homes are farther apart. Less hand-labor is required on grain farms than on dairy farms, and the demand for it varies in different seasons. The returns are apt to be seasonal also, especially if only one crop is grown, and the

<sup>13</sup> Professor C. E. Lively has studied this problem to some extent. See, *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, Vol. XXIII, pages 35-50, for a report of his initial study.

<sup>14</sup> *Agricultural Cooperative Organizations*, United States Department of Agriculture, Technical Bulletin 40.

income is less certain in any given year than the income from diversified farming. The life of a grain farmer is less regular than that of the dairy farmer. This fact affects the community organizations to some extent. During the planting and harvesting seasons interest in community affairs is apt to lag and may not be revived again when farm work is less urgent. In the event of crop failures the programs of churches, schools, and other institutions are seriously handicapped by lack of money. On the other hand, when funds are plentiful, the prosperous condition will be reflected in the various aspects of community life.

Diversified farming, live stock farming, fruit farming, cotton growing, and truck farming, are other types that may be mentioned. Diversified farming, as the name implies, is a type where several different kinds of crops and livestock are grown. It is less distinctive in its effect upon the farmer's habits and upon rural organizations than any of the other types, because the influences of the various enterprises tend to offset one another. Livestock farming resembles dairy farming in its effects on farm people, unless it is carried on in an extensive way, as on a ranch. Fruit growing varies a great deal, depending upon the type of fruit grown. It is like grain farming in the respect that the work is seasonal and the returns less regular than in the case of dairy farming.

Cotton growing and truck farming represent types that require a large amount of hand labor at certain seasons of the year. Where truck crops are grown, the farms are usually small. Consequently, the density of population is greater than in a section where either livestock or dairy farms are numerous. The families usually have several children, and child labor is frequently utilized. Income from either cotton growing or truck farming is not large, and often it is irregular. These types of farming are not always desirable from the social standpoint, because the success of the farm enterprise is too dependent upon family labor. They encourage tenant farming and low standards of living, unless the income from the farm is supplemented from other sources. Recent agitation for diversified farming, especially

in the cotton growing sections, tends to offset the seasonal character of the farm work and increases the income, with decided benefit to the social welfare of the people involved

*Tenancy and Its Influences*—A large amount of material has been written about tenancy and its social effects. It has been associated with all kinds of social problems and has been looked upon as an omen of social deterioration. Tenancy is, however, primarily an economic, not a sociological concept. There are many different classes of tenants, therefore generalizations which are true for one class may not be true for another. The fact that he is a tenant is only one among dozens of other facts that help to explain the social status of a tenant farmer, or any particular group of tenants. In the past, tenancy has seemed so important that other circumstances which modify the behavior and ideals of people have been overshadowed by it. Recent studies in the sociology of rural life are showing the weakness of this point of view.

The figures in Table I show the extent to which the farms in the various states are occupied by tenants. The mere fact that there is such a variation in the percentage of farms which are rented indicates that tenancy is an extremely variable factor. It is customary to class the so-called "croppers" in the Southern states as tenants. These families supply the labor needed on the farms on which cotton is grown, but the land, capital, and sometimes even groceries, are furnished by the owner. These families ordinarily have a low standard of living and from certain points of view might be classed as farm laborers rather than farm tenants. To consider these families entirely as tenants tends to create a dreary and confused picture of tenancy in the United States. But, since they are so classified, they contribute largely to the high percentage of tenancy recorded for many of the Southern states. On the other hand, in some of the fertile farming areas of the Corn Belt the high percentage of tenancy appears to be due to entirely different circumstances. Here, as a general rule, farming is profitable, and the owners retire from active operation of the farm at a fairly early age. The farm is then rented by a relative or some other person possessing capital and sufficient

TABLE I PERCENTAGE OF FARMS IN EACH STATE OPERATED BY TENANTS  
AND PER CENT OF TENANTS RELATED TO LANDLORDS \*

State	Total Number of Farms	Per Cent Operated by Tenants	Per Cent of Tenants Related to Landlord
United States	6,288,648	42 4	19 2
New England			
Maine	39,006	4 5	30 3
New Hampshire	14,906	5 3	26 5
Vermont	24,898	9 7	25 0
Massachusetts	25,598	5 6	30 4
Rhode Island	3,322	12 5	21 0
Connecticut	17,195	6 2	26 1
Middle Atlantic			
New York	159,806	13 2	28 5
New Jersey	25,378	15 6	24 2
Pennsylvania	172,419	15 9	29 6
East North Central			
Ohio	219,296	26 3	30 4
Indiana	181,570	30 1	28 0
Illinois	214,497	43 1	28 7
Michigan	169,372	15 5	31 0
Wisconsin	181,767	18 2	38 6
West North Central			
Minnesota	185,255	31 1	31 5
Iowa	214,928	47 3	32 1
Missouri	255,940	34 8	23 1
North Dakota	77,975	35 1	22 3
South Dakota	83,157	44 6	25 0
Nebraska	129,458	47 1	34 8
Kansas	166,042	42 4	31 1
South Atlantic			
Delaware	9,707	33 8	13 5
Maryland	43,203	26 5	19 9
District of Columbia	104	23 1	8 3
Virginia	170,610	28 1	20 2
West Virginia	82,641	18 6	20 6
North Carolina	279,708	49 2	15 3
South Carolina	157,931	65 1	11 2
Georgia	255,598	68 2	12 6
Florida	58,966	28 4	13 2
East South Central			
Kentucky	246,499	35 9	22 9
Tennessee	245,657	46 2	19 2
Alabama	257,395	64 7	14 6
Mississippi	312,663	72 2	9 7
West South Central			
Arkansas	242,334	63 0	12 4
Louisiana	161,445	66 6	11 8
Oklahoma	203,866	61 5	14 9
Texas	495,489	60 9	18 1
Mountain			
Montana	47,495	24 5	14 0
Idaho	41,674	25 3	19 5
Wyoming	16,011	22 0	16 2
Colorado	59,956	34 5	16 6
New Mexico	31,404	20 2	15 2
Arizona	14,173	16 4	11 4
Utah	27,159	12 2	35 3
Nevada	3,442	12 9	18 9
Pacific			
Washington	70,904	17 0	21 1
Oregon	55,153	17 8	23 1
California	135,676	18 0	11 8

\* Source of data *Fifteenth Census, Agriculture* Vol II, part I.



business ability to manage an enterprise representing an investment of several thousand dollars in livestock and equipment

It should also be pointed out that the percentage of rented farms in the United States has greatly increased since 1925. In that year 38.6% of the farms were rented, in 1920, 38.1%, while in 1930 the percentage was 42.4. The reason for this increase may be due primarily to the economic condition prevalent in agriculture since the World War. Certainly, with the low prices of farm products, the usual number of tenant farmers could not save enough to purchase farms of their own. On the contrary, the ownership of many farms which were purchased has been transferred to the original holder through mortgage foreclosure or other means. In all probability many of these farms are now rented. Not only did the percentage of farms operated by tenants increase during the decade but also the total acreage of crop land harvested by tenants and the average of all land per farm operated by tenants. These facts might appear to indicate that tenancy is spreading to all farms in the nation and that the age-old fear that farmers would become a poor landless class like many European peasants might, some day, be realized. There is another side to the picture, however. Nineteen and two-tenths per cent of the tenants throughout the country are related to the landlord. These tenants will probably inherit a part or all of the land they are renting. Very little distinction, if any, exists between them and owners in their standard of living or in the interest which they show in the improvement of community life. Under such circumstances, then, tenancy is a step toward ownership.

According to the 1920 census data, 24% of all farm owners had been tenants and 20% had been both farm laborers and tenants previous to their status as farm owners.<sup>15</sup> In Cedar County, Iowa, only 5.6% of 252 farm owners had skipped the tenant state before acquisition of their farms.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, some

<sup>15</sup> L. C. Gray and Others, *Farm Ownership and Tenancy*, United States Department of Agriculture, Yearbook, 1923, page 555

<sup>16</sup> G. H. Von Tungeln and Others, *The Social Aspects of Rural Life and Tenantry, Cedar County, Iowa*, Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 217

circumstances may arise which make it advantageous for a farmer to rent a farm, even though he has money enough to purchase one. Under such conditions no one would question the value or desirability of tenancy. Since 1925 it is possible that farmers could benefit more by renting than by owning a farm, for they then need not assume the responsibilities of ownership, such as making payments on a mortgage and paying taxes.

If tenants seemingly have no opportunity to buy farms, then tenancy presents quite a different picture. Such conditions are apt to be pathological in character. They call for the wisest kind of economic and social policy. Perhaps, if detailed investigation is made, it will appear that people who are tenants when undesirable circumstances exist suffer under other handicaps besides purely economic ones. Lack of adequate education, thriftlessness, inertia, excessively large families and poor physical and mental inheritance, may exist also. These are handicaps which originate in the social environment. It might avail little to remove economic handicaps if nothing were done to improve social conditions. Economic conditions are so closely interrelated with other conditions that an improvement in one necessitates an improvement in others. If an efficient and modern school system could be provided in districts where tenancy is prevalent, many circumstances which now retard the progress of these people could be removed. These statements would seem to be particularly applicable to the South in areas where the "cropper" system of tenancy prevails, but they are equally applicable to other places where schools, churches, and other agencies designed to improve the quality of the population, are ineffective or are entirely absent.

The statement is sometimes made that tenancy tends to produce social stratification between owners and tenants. However, this can result only in case tenancy becomes a permanent status less desirable than that of the farm owner. In the rural parts of the United States, certainly in the parts where racial factors are not involved, little consideration is given to class distinctions. If tenants are discriminated against in a social way, the discrimination is due not so much to the fact that the individuals

are tenants, but to the fact that they possess other qualities or habits that are undesirable. Owner families are discriminated against, also, if they are undesirable or possess anti-social traits.

The objections most frequently raised to tenancy in its social aspect are (1) a low standard of living, (2) shifting of the population; and (3) the deterioration of churches, schools and social organizations in communities where tenancy exists. These objections are logical and valid, though the implications drawn from them are sometimes unwarranted. Take the objection, low standard of living. The criteria to measure this, though obviously inadequate, are usually the number (or per cent) of household conveniences or modern improvements in the houses occupied by tenants compared with improvements and conveniences enjoyed by owners. The figures almost invariably show that the tenants have fewer such advantages. There are certain reasons for this. In the first place the tenant, being a renter, is not in a position to make modern improvements in the house. This is a responsibility of ownership. The owner, however, may not be able to make improvements or care to do so, as he is renting the farm and may plan to dispose of it. Another factor is the age of the tenant. In most of the Northern states at least, he is a young man who usually is attempting to accumulate enough capital to make the initial step in the purchase of a farm. His chief concern is saving money. Consequently he does not make as many expenditures for conveniences and items usually classified under advancement as do people with larger financial resources. The desire for these goods or services may be present, nevertheless, and it is unwise, apparently, to over-emphasize their absence.

When large groups of tenants are compared with large groups of owners selected from various parts of the United States, instead of particular regions, the percentage of the income tenants spend for various items does not differ greatly from that of owners. The data in support of this statement appear in Table II.

A more basic test than current expenditure or use of modern conveniences of the effect of tenancy on the standard of living

TABLE II. PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURES FOR DIFFERENT ITEMS BY OWNERS AND TENANTS.\*

Item	Owners	Tenants
Food	39.9	44.7
Operation	13.5	13.1
Goods.		
Furniture and Furnishings	2.5	2.4
Clothing	14.8	14.5
Maintenance of Health	3.7	4.3
Advancement	7.4	4.3
Personal Goods	2.6	2.5
Insurance, Life and Health	2.6	2.4

\* From E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin No. 1466

would be to determine whether or not a tenant actually changes his standard of living as he accumulates more capital. It is well to remember, as inferred in a preceding paragraph, that even among tenants the standard of living is the net resultant of many factors and influences of which the tenant status is only one. If educational advantages and social contacts can be kept wholesome and stimulating, it is scarcely possible that tenancy alone could result in a standard of living, which in its significant aspects, would be low.

The seriousness of the objections to the shifting of the tenant population obviously depends both on the number and the quality of the people who leave an area that is served by their customary social institutions. Data pertaining to these items are not at hand, although one study shows that about 60% of the moves made by tenant farmers are from farm to farm within the same community and do not necessarily involve the severing of community relationships.<sup>17</sup> Information about the latter problem is not available. It may be that the shifts which do involve transfer from one community to another are confined to a small group of tenants who do not readily form connections with churches or other community institutions. These tenants

<sup>17</sup> L. C. Gray and Others, *Farm Ownership and Tenancy*, United States Department of Agriculture, Yearbook, 1923, page 597.

are apt to be neglected unless special effort is made to interest them in neighborhood and community life. They may develop habits of isolation and become reluctant to take advantage of opportunities that are available. The proportion of this group increases as farms become poorer and the returns to tenant farmers diminish.

It is impossible to tell what percentage of the families in an area served by any given school or church can move elsewhere without reducing the efficacy of the institution. The quality of the families that leave, as well as the number, will influence the situation. It is certain that some families can move without serious damage to community institutions. A limited amount of shifting may be desirable. It prevents the inbreeding of stock and ideas and makes the people less subservient to undesirable community customs. Evidently tenancy is a necessary status for a certain portion of the population at the present time. Under existing conditions, therefore, social institutions and organizations must recognize the fact of tenancy and plan to overcome whatever disadvantages it may have.

The concern evinced over the elimination of tenancy is likely to prove fruitless unless due consideration is given to the improvement of the communities where tenants live. Merely to change their economic status without improving educational advantages and cultural interests would accomplish little. A population of farm owners imbued with low ideals and unprogressive attitudes would be no more likely to make greater contributions to social progress than would a group of tenants with similar characteristics.

In thus describing occupational influences on farm people, there is no intention to give the impression that they are wholly determinative in shaping the social status of the farm population. Important as they are, the future may tell a different story. Changes in methods of farming, modern means of communication and transportation are having their effects. Gradually the farm population is being immersed in the psychic planes and currents that exist in other social and occupational groups. As this happens, the occupational influence of farming becomes less

marked. Derivative contacts and derivative group controls (controls through printed matter, radio and state or nation-wide organizations), will be dominant forces in socializing the future farm populations. Occupational influences may be important, but instead of dominating the situation, they will simply influence the direction and manner in which the derivative controls will operate.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Define the term, *farm*.
2. What circumstances favor the development of small farms?
3. What purposes may the farmer have in view when he engages in farming?
4. Name some of the factors that determine a farmer's success in farming
5. How does the application of science influence farming and the personality of the farmer?
6. In what ways does machinery affect the nature of farming and farm life?
7. Describe the influence on farm life of small units of production in agriculture.
8. How does the nature of farm work affect the personality of the farmer?
9. Why is farming singularly dependent upon family life?
10. How may the inter-relationship of the farm business and the farm family affect the well-being of the latter?
11. Why does farming encourage frugality?
12. Describe the characteristic influences of grain farming, dairy farming, cotton farming and truck farming
13. Why is tenancy considered to be a social problem?
14. Why are the undesirable influences of tenancy often over-emphasized?

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PART II

THE RURAL POPULATION



## CHAPTER III

### THE RURAL POPULATION

The term "rural" as used in the United States Census includes all persons living on farms, those living in unincorporated villages and hamlets, and residents of incorporated places having a population of less than 2,500. Places over 2,500 in population are counted as urban. This is an arbitrary, though well recognized, classification between these two groups. It was used in 1910 when the census data were tabulated, and the same procedure was followed in 1920 and 1930. At one time 8,000 was designated as the upper limit for rural population. Later the number was reduced to 4,000 and finally, as has just been noted, to 2,500.<sup>1</sup> It is thus evident that mining towns, small factory towns and suburbs are classed as rural if they are below 2,500 in population. Yet it is entirely possible that residents in these places will resemble more nearly the urban population in attitudes and occupational pursuits than they will the farm population. But, lacking a definite criterion for measuring such characteristics of a population, census administrators have been forced to depend upon the *size* of our incorporated places as the criterion for urban population.

In the census of 1930, however, a new classification was made in the rural population, namely the rural non-farm population. This classification is based on the assumption, well supported by research and observation, that the differences between the people living on farms and those in towns are so numerous and great that for certain purposes a clear understanding of each

<sup>1</sup> The dividing line between urban and rural population is not uniform. For example, in France 2,000 is considered the upper limit for the rural population and this appears to be the general practice in most of Continental Europe. See, Bedford, *Readings in Urban Sociology*, D. Appleton-Century Co., pages 27-34, for a discussion of definition of cities.

group is impossible unless this division is made. In the present chapter major emphasis will be put on the rural population in the United States. Both the rural farm and rural non-farm populations will be considered because these groups are a part of the total rural situation. Data for the two groups will be presented separately, though occasionally they will be treated as a unit when the division has not been made in the census tabulation or when a distinction does not enhance the description of the subject being considered. Reference will be made to the urban population when comparisons are made between rural and urban groups.

*Number of Rural People*—Taking the usual dividing point as 2,500 the census data show that there were 53,820,223 persons in the United States classified as rural in 1930. This was 43.8% of the total population. In 1920 the rural population was 48.6% of the total.<sup>2</sup> In 1910 it was 54.2%. Each decade since 1880 the percentage of the total population which constitutes the rural population has decreased. It may appear from these figures and statements that there has been an actual decrease in the rural population, but such is not the case. On the contrary, there has been an actual increase in the number of rural people from decade to decade as the following figures show:

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF RURAL PEOPLE	INCREASE FROM PRECEDING DECADE
1930	53,820,223	2,414,206
1920	51,406,017	1,599,871
1910	49,806,146	4,192,004
1900	45,614,142	4,964,789
1890	40,649,353	4,851,737
1880	35,797,616	

Numerous circumstances contribute to the growth of the rural population. One is natural increase, that is, excess of births over deaths. The rural population has always contributed to its population by natural increase because in the rural environment conditions are favorable to the rearing of children. Dr.

<sup>2</sup> *Fifteenth Census of the United States*, Vol. 1, p. 8.

J. M. Gillette calculated that 59% of the increase in the rural population from 1910 to 1920 was due to natural increase.<sup>3</sup> Doubtless there are variations from this figure in different parts of the country and in different decades, but certainly the natural increase has been an important source of growth in the rural population. A second contribution to the increase of population is migration into rural territory. Migrants have come from two sources, namely, from foreign countries and from urban districts within the United States. In decades previous to the last one the migration of people from foreign countries contributed in a significant degree to population increase. Within recent years, however, the number has decreased as immigration quotas have become more and more restricted and the opportunities in agriculture less alluring than in former decades. The migration of urban people to the country has continued, however, and was greatly accelerated by the depression years following 1929. The movement of rural people into urban areas balances to some extent the effect of the countryward movement. But in normal times the increase from either natural increase or immigration is large enough to offset loss due to urbanward migration to the extent indicated by the above figures.

When the data for the rural population are examined by states it is apparent that the increase in the total rural population is not uniform throughout the country. Some states show an increase, whereas in others there has been a decrease. The following figures show the changes which occurred in this respect in the decade from 1920 to 1930.

An examination of these data suggests that one cause of the increase in the rural population is the presence of urban centers. Where such centers exist, urban workers settle in rural territory around them and consequently small suburbs develop. Certainly this would be a factor in New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and some other areas that have a proportionally large urban population. In fact, detailed studies show that it is true. In a study of population trends in New York State Dr. Anderson found that the so-called urban counties and the counties sub-

<sup>3</sup> J. M. Gillette, *Rural Sociology*, The Macmillan Company, 1928, page 85.

TABLE III INCREASE OR DECREASE OF RURAL POPULATION IN EACH STATE<sup>\*</sup>  
1920 TO 1930<sup>4</sup>

State	Rural Popu- lation 1930	Increase (+) or Decrease (—) from Preceding Census	Per Cent Rural Population	
			1930	1920
United States	53,820,223	2,414,206	43.8	48.6
New England				
Maine	475,917	7,472	59.7	61.0
New Hampshire	192,214	28,892	41.3	36.9
Vermont	240,845	— 1,607	67.0	68.8
Massachusetts	418,188	216,080	9.8	5.2
Rhode Island	52,068	36,851	7.6	2.5
Connecticut	475,133	30,841	29.6	32.2
Middle Atlantic				
New York	2,066,114	270,731	16.4	17.3
New Jersey	702,090	21,126	17.4	21.6
Pennsylvania	3,097,839	— 14,363	32.2	35.7
East North Central				
Ohio	2,139,326	57,068	32.2	36.2
Indiana	1,442,611	— 4,924	44.5	49.4
Illinois	1,994,927	— 87,200	26.1	32.1
Michigan	1,540,250	113,398	31.8	38.9
Wisconsin	1,385,163	— 2,336	47.1	52.7
West North Central				
Minnesota	1,306,337	— 29,195	51.0	55.9
Iowa	1,491,647	— 36,879	60.4	63.6
Missouri	1,770,248	— 46,904	48.8	53.4
North Dakota	567,539	8,906	83.4	86.4
South Dakota	561,942	27,267	81.1	84.0
Nebraska	891,856	790	64.7	68.7
Kansas	1,151,165	— 128	61.2	65.1
South Atlantic				
Delaware	115,234	12,998	48.3	45.8
Maryland	656,657	76,418	40.2	40.0
Virginia	1,636,314	1,111	67.6	70.8
West Virginia	1,237,704	143,007	71.6	74.8
North Carolina	2,360,429	291,676	74.5	80.8
South Carolina	1,367,685	— 22,052	78.7	82.5
Georgia	2,013,014	— 154,959	69.2	74.9
Florida	708,433	95,788	48.3	63.3
East South Central				
Kentucky	1,815,563	32,476	69.4	73.8
Tennessee	1,720,018	— 6,641	65.7	73.9
Alabama	1,901,975	63,118	71.9	78.3
Mississippi	1,670,971	120,474	83.1	86.6
West South Central				
Arkansas	1,471,604	9,897	79.4	83.4
Louisiana	1,268,061	97,715	60.3	65.1
Oklahoma	1,574,359	85,556	65.7	73.4
Texas	3,435,367	284,828	59.0	67.6
Mountain				
Montana	356,570	— 20,308	66.3	68.7
Idaho	315,525	2,696	70.9	72.4
Wyoming	155,468	18,414	68.9	70.5
Colorado	515,909	29,539	49.8	51.8
New Mexico	316,501	21,111	74.8	82.0
Arizona	285,717	69,082	65.6	64.8
Utah	241,583	7,771	47.6	52.0
Nevada	56,594	5,559	62.2	80.3
Pacific				
Washington	678,857	70,971	43.4	44.8
Oregon	464,040	71,671	48.7	50.1
California	1,516,655	421,523	26.7	32.0

<sup>\*</sup> Source of data *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. I, page 15

urban to New York City had important population increases in both the urban and rural classes<sup>5</sup> Likewise in a study of population trends in Michigan it was found that increased manufacturing activities were primarily responsible for the growth of twenty-one counties in the southern part of the state<sup>6</sup> In Broome county, New York, to cite a specific county, data show that the increase in the population of unincorporated villages and of persons in the open country not on farms, amounted to 225% between 1920 and 1930 On the other hand, the farm population in this county decreased 19% from 1910 to 1925 but remained stationary during the last five years<sup>7</sup> Numerous other examples might be cited to substantiate the fact that urbanization contributes to the increase of the rural population in areas immediately surrounding the large urban centers. Other causes of an increase in the rural population in any particular state would be the settlement of new land which had been made available for farming, or changes from an extensive type of agriculture to a more intensive type. These influences are probably effective in some states not having a large urban population.

The circumstances that produce a decrease of the rural population in any given area are numerous Some of the more important ones may be listed as follows (1) the total abandonment of farms in regions where the land is submarginal for agriculture; (2) the abandonment of scattered farmsteads in sections of the country where land is useful for farming, but where the size of farms is being increased, (3) the greater use of machinery on the farms; (4) the movement of people from towns of less than 2,500 in population to larger towns and cities, and (5) the classification of a town in the urban division if its population increases beyond 2,500. The relative importance of these factors in causing a decrease in the rural population

<sup>5</sup> W A Anderson, *Population Trends in New York State 1900-1930*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N Y, Bulletin 547

<sup>6</sup> J F Thaden, *Population Trends in Michigan*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 236

<sup>7</sup> Dwight Sanderson, *Social and Economic Areas of Broome County, New York, 1928*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 559

cannot be accurately determined. Any one, or all of them, may be significant at different times and in different parts of the country. Frequently land that is cultivated profitably at one time becomes submarginal at another and is abandoned. This is true in some of the New England States, in the cut-over regions of the Great Lake States and in sections of the country where there is insufficient rainfall. It is also true that the size of farm is changing somewhat in different parts of the country, and that more machinery is being used on the farms

Either an increase or a decrease in the rural population requires adjustments in community organization which, if not made, retard the efforts of the people in attaining desirable standards of living. An increase of the population calls for added school facilities, more improved roads and an expansion of other services of government. These adjustments ordinarily cause no great difficulty, for people consider them evidences of progress. If, however, the newcomers to any particular area differ markedly from the former residents in their standard of living and cultural interests, factions may develop in the community and much strife and ill feeling result. Difficulties are especially likely to occur if the persons coming to the area are city workers who desire the advantages of living in the country. Then occupational interests tend to supplement and enhance their differences to such an extent that an integration of the interests of the old and the new groups in matters pertaining to community progress becomes well nigh impossible.

The results of a decrease in the population are marked usually by a decline in the financial resources of the community, a curtailment in governmental activities, and restricted programs on the part of community organizations such as the church or civic groups. If the decrease in population occurs gradually, adjustments in community life can be made to meet them. When the decrease occurs rapidly, a state of chaos in community affairs is almost inevitable.

The acceptable minimum density of the population in a rural area is not known with definiteness. It is generally conceded now that rural families should have the benefit of community



life, such as facilities for trade, good schools and medical service. If the families are too widely scattered, these services become too expensive or totally unavailable. It is known that approximately 1,000 people are required to support the ordinary trade agencies like grocery and hardware stores<sup>8</sup> and that this number of inhabitants can support a physician. In a population group of this size there also would be enough children of school age to make the maintenance of a school advisable. On the basis of these considerations it would seem that a community area of less than 1,000 people should not be encouraged. This is especially true if the families are scattered widely, because six to ten miles is about as far as a family can travel with regularity to secure community services.

At this point it is of interest to note the proportion of the rural population which is classified as rural farm and rural non-farm. The Fifteenth Census gives the following figures for these two groups.

TABLE IV. PROPORTION OF POPULATION THAT IS RURAL FARM, RURAL NON-FARM AND URBAN FARM

	1930		1920	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Total Rural Population	53,820,223	100.0	51,406,017	100.0
Rural Farm Population	30,157,513	56.0	31,358,640	61.0
Rural Non Farm Population	23,374,873	43.4	19,791,748	38.5
Urban Farm Population	287,837	.6	255,629	.5

It is evident that the farm population is the major part of the rural population and that the urban farm population is a comparatively small part of the total because this consists only of farmers who happen to live in urban territory. The rural non-farm population, often called the village population, is a large part of the total, and doubtless in many minor civil divisions

<sup>8</sup> See chapter XIX for discussion and data concerning this point.

of the United States it would constitute more than half of the rural population. This would be true most likely near large cities where the suburban movement has developed. It is in these areas, too, where harmonious adjustments between the farm and the non-farm groups are difficult to secure. In other areas, where the rural non-farm population consists of people living in villages that are trade centers for rural people, differences between the two groups are more easily adjusted.

Data for the distribution of rural minor civil divisions cannot be given in this chapter and persons interested in any particular area, such as a county, may secure such information in the government census. It is possible, however, to present the distribution of the population in each state for 1930 as given in Table V.

The percentages in this table suggest several questions. For example, is a high percentage of urban population inimical to the well being of the rural people? A definite answer to this question cannot be given because the factors involved are numerous and intricate. In so far as urban population contributes to the wealth of a state or nation it must be considered as advantageous. Possibly also the presence of cities in an area furnishes a market for certain farm products that otherwise would not exist. Then it is possible that facilities for cultural advancement may be made available to the rural people because cities are nearby. On the other hand, as the urban population increases proportionally in any given area it tends to play a greater part in legislative programs and the development of national policies. The point of view of the urban population may or may not be helpful to rural people. The relationships between these two population groups have not been studied in sufficient detail to indicate what programs are mutually helpful or mutually harmful. It seems that up to the present time those which create conflict have received more attention than mutually helpful relationships. There can be little question, however, but what numerous relationships of the latter type exist. Possibly the fact that they are so numerous causes them to be accepted without special consideration and their importance is thus under-

TABLE V DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN EACH STATE IN 1930 \*

State	Total Population	Per cent Urban	Per cent Rural	Per cent Rural Farm	Per cent Rural Non-Farm
New England					
Maine	797,423	40.3	59.7	20.2	39.5
New Hampshire	465,293	58.7	41.3	11.8	29.5
Vermont	359,611	33.0	67.0	31.1	35.9
Massachusetts	4,249,614	90.2	9.8	1.9	7.9
Rhode Island	687,497	92.4	7.6	1.5	6.1
Connecticut	1,606,903	70.4	29.6	5.0	24.6
Middle Atlantic					
New York	12,588,066	83.6	16.4	5.6	10.8
New Jersey	4,041,334	82.6	17.4	3.0	14.4
Pennsylvania	9,631,350	67.8	32.2	8.8	23.4
East North Central					
Ohio	6,646,697	67.8	32.2	15.1	17.1
Indiana	3,238,503	55.5	44.5	25.0	19.5
Illinois	7,630,654	73.9	26.1	13.0	13.1
Michigan	4,842,325	68.2	31.8	16.0	15.8
Wisconsin	2,939,006	52.9	47.1	29.7	17.4
West North Central					
Minnesota	2,563,953	49.0	51.0	34.6	16.4
Iowa	2,470,939	39.6	60.4	39.0	21.4
Missouri	3,629,367	51.2	48.8	30.6	18.2
North Dakota	680,845	16.6	83.4	58.3	25.1
South Dakota	692,849	18.9	81.1	56.2	24.9
Nebraska	1,377,963	35.3	64.7	42.3	22.4
Kansas	1,880,999	38.8	61.2	37.5	23.7
South Atlantic					
Delaware	238,380	51.7	48.3	19.4	28.9
Maryland	1,631,526	59.8	40.2	14.5	25.7
Virginia	2,241,851	32.4	67.6	39.2	28.4
West Virginia	1,729,205	28.4	71.6	25.9	45.7
North Carolina	3,170,276	25.5	74.5	50.4	24.1
South Carolina	1,738,765	21.3	78.7	52.6	26.1
Georgia	2,908,506	30.8	69.2	48.6	20.6
Florida	1,468,211	51.7	48.3	18.7	29.6
East South Central					
Kentucky	2,614,589	30.6	69.4	44.9	24.5
Tennessee	2,616,556	34.3	65.7	46.4	19.3
Alabama	2,646,248	28.1	71.9	50.5	21.4
Mississippi	2,009,821	16.9	83.1	67.7	15.4
West South Central					
Arkansas	1,854,482	20.6	79.4	60.3	19.1
Louisiana	2,101,593	39.7	60.3	39.3	21.0
Oklahoma	2,396,040	34.3	65.7	42.6	23.1
Texas	5,824,715	41.0	59.0	40.2	18.8
Mountain					
Montana	537,606	33.7	66.3	37.9	28.4
Idaho	445,032	29.1	70.9	41.8	29.1
Wyoming	225,565	31.1	68.9	32.3	36.6
Colorado	1,035,791	50.2	49.8	27.1	22.7
New Mexico	423,317	25.2	74.8	37.3	37.5
Arizona	435,573	34.4	65.6	22.7	42.9
Utah	507,847	52.4	47.6	21.0	26.6
Nevada	91,059	37.8	62.2	17.9	44.3
Pacific					
Washington	1,563,396	56.6	43.4	19.2	24.2
Oregon	953,786	51.3	48.7	23.2	25.5
California	5,677,251	73.3	26.7	10.2	16.5
United States	122,775,046	56.2	43.8	24.6	19.2

\* Source of data *Fifteenth Census*

estimated. However, regardless of how small proportionally the rural population of a state may be, it does not necessarily follow that it is unimportant. The value of agricultural products produced by it may amount to millions of dollars and the influence of the rural group through migration, legislation and in other ways furnishes a desirable balance to urbanization.

*Color and Nativity of the Rural Population*—The color and nativity of the rural population are important characteristics, not necessarily because some may be basically superior to others (though some persons may think that this is true), but rather because if these characteristics change rapidly, numerous problems in social adjustment and community organization are created. The native white group has always predominated in the rural population and this still appears to be true according to the census data.

TABLE VI. PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES ACCORDING TO NATIVITY AND COLOR.\*

Color and Nativity	Urban		Rural		Rural Farm		Rural Non-Farm	
	1930	1920	1930	1920	1930	1920	1930	1920
White	91.1	93.2	85.5	86.0	82.5	83.1	89.4	90.4
Native	75.6	74.1	80.6	79.5	78.9	78.6	82.8	80.8
Native Percentage	48.6	45.2	68.1	65.9	68.0	66.7	68.2	64.6
Foreign or Mixed Percentage	27.0	28.9	12.5	13.6	11.0	11.9	14.6	16.2
Foreign Percentage	18.8	20.8	7.5	8.5	6.5	7.3	8.8	10.5
Foreign Born	15.6	19.1	4.9	6.5	3.6	4.6	6.6	9.6
Negro	7.5	6.6	12.4	13.4	15.5	16.3	8.5	9.0
Other Races	1.3	0.2	2.0	0.6	2.0	0.6	2.1	0.6

\* Source of data *Fifteenth Census*, Vol III, Part I, p 13

Approximately four-fifths of the white population in rural territory is classified as native white. The foreign born constitute less than 5% of the rural farm population and (in 1930) only 6.6% of the rural non-farm population. It is a habit of

the foreign born to settle in cities, though later a certain number may become residents in rural areas. Evidently the foreigners, including even the native whites of foreign parentage, constitute only a small proportion of the rural residents. They would be scarcely noticeable if evenly distributed over the entire rural area.

However, the majority of foreign-born farmers who come to this country do not settle in places isolated from other members of their nationality to any extent. They find farms in areas where members of their nationality live. German communities, Scandinavian communities, and, more recently, Polish communities, Italian communities and others have developed in different parts of the country. The countryside is not free from those settlements so frequently characterized as "foreign." In many such communities the social customs and traditions common on a foreign soil are found. Only gradually are they given up or woven into manners and customs called American.

The contribution of these foreign-born groups to the development of our agriculture is as yet unwritten. Few can doubt the significance of the influence they have had. Many of these immigrants make excellent farmers, in spite of the fact that in recent years it has been necessary for them to settle on inferior land which could be purchased at a low cost per acre. The immigrants who came to our country before the present century had an opportunity to get the better grades of land, for they, like the native farmers, were settling new country in the fertile farming areas of the Middle West. Now the foreign born tend to go to the poorer lands in the New England states and to the cut-over areas around the Great Lakes.

It is well to point out also that the rural communities made up of the foreign born are often very progressive. As an example, the Askov community in the northern part of Minnesota may be cited. This community was established in 1903 by Danish people. It has had a steady growth since that time and is now one of the leading agricultural communities in the state. The co-operative principle is well established and a large proportion of the produce sold is marketed through co-operative associations. There is a consolidated school in the community

which offers, in addition to the elementary grades, a four-year high school course. The cultural and recreational interests of the people far surpass in variety and quality those which are found in many communities where native Americans live<sup>9</sup> So far as community life is concerned, the advent of foreign born does not create problems of social adjustment, unless their standard of living or cultural interests differ to a marked degree from those which already prevail. In some of the older sections of the United States incoming foreigners have been looked upon with disfavor, not because they lacked industry or frugality, but rather because they were not interested in the neighborhood and community activities which the people had developed and because they were satisfied with a lower standard of living than the native inhabitants. There seems to be no solution to a problem of this kind except to try through every possible means to raise the standard of living of the foreign group. Otherwise their standards will eventually prevail in the community.

The figures in Table VI show that, although the negroes are proportionally more numerous in the rural population than in the urban, they constitute only 15.5% of the farm population as classified in 1930. However, negroes are found principally in the Southern states where in some sections they are very numerous. In Mississippi, the state having the largest number of negroes on farms, 56.1% of the rural farm population belongs to this race. In Georgia the corresponding percentage is 39.3. In North Carolina negroes constitute 31.1% of the farm population and in South Carolina 54.5%. Obviously, where the proportions of negroes is so high, the problems of race adjustment arise. Since negroes have lived in the country for a longer period of time than they have in the cities, the problem of improving their standard of living does not seem so necessary or urgent. Yet it is unlikely that any state can make the maximum contribution to the advancement of the nation or the well-being of its citizens if a large proportion of the popu-

<sup>9</sup> A detailed description of the Askov and three other communities of foreign born in the United States may be found in *Immigrant Farmers and Their Children* by Edmund de S. Brunner, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1929

lation, regardless of race or nationality, is handicapped by a lack of educational facilities and the means to maintain a desirable standard of living. It is in this connection that the relationship of the white and negro races in the United States becomes a part of the rural problem. What the solution of the problem will be is largely a matter of prophecy, though it is fairly certain that a solution will not be reached until conditions are adjusted so that the facilities of financial security and cultural development are extended to all citizens. This does not mean necessarily that members of the white and black races shall mingle together freely in all forms of social intercourse. It does mean, however, that each group shall have the chance to develop to the fullest extent its capacity for attaining social progress.

Although there were more negroes in the United States in 1930 than in 1920 or 1910 there was an actual decrease proportionally. In 1930 this group comprised 9.7% of the entire population, whereas in 1920 the corresponding figure was 9.9 and in 1910, 10.7. However, in the rural population there was a decrease in actual numbers as well as in the percentage which these numbers represent of the total population. The exact figures follow:

YEAR	NUMBER OF NEGROES IN RURAL POPULATION	PER CENT OF TOTAL RURAL POPULATION
1930	6,697,230	12.4
1920	6,903,658	13.4
1910	7,142,966	14.3

A part of this decrease can be attributed to the migration of negroes to urban centers, for during these same decades the number of negroes in the urban population increased. It is possible also that changes in the rate of natural increase contributed to the decrease of negroes in rural sections.

These changes do not mean that the negro race is becoming extinct and that therefore the so-called negro problem will eliminate itself. The opposite is more nearly the truth. Certainly the negro population is creating numerous problems in

cities, and there is no indication that either urbanward migration or a decline in the rate of natural increase will eliminate the presence of negroes in rural areas where they are now settled.

The classification, "other races," includes the Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican and a few others. The inclusion of the Mexicans is a deviation from the 1920 census classification, and consequently the actual figures and percentages for other races show an increase, indicated in Table VI. The Indians are quite widely distributed over the West and Northwest, whereas the Japanese and Chinese, who are rural residents, are found along the Pacific coast, especially in California. In this state in 1920 6.1% of the farmers were Japanese. Nearly all of the 4,287 Chinese farmers reported for the entire United States in 1920 lived in California. Most of the 1,422,533 Mexicans in the United States in 1930 were found in the South and West.

*Sex Distribution*—The Fifteenth Census reports 108.3 males per 100 females in the rural population. The corresponding figure for the urban population is 98.1. These figures confirm what has been observed frequently about the proportion of males and females in the population. The rural environment does not provide an opportunity of gainful employment for women. Consequently many of them migrate to the city where employment in factories, stores and domestic service may be found. On the other hand, the rural environment favors the employment of males. Generally speaking, farming demands more men than women. One woman can do the housekeeping on a farm which may be large enough to furnish employment to several men. Many farm laborers are unmarried men who secure board and lodging on the farm.

The ratio of men to women in the rural native white population corresponds closely to the figure for the total rural population. In the case of the foreign born white, there are in the rural population 134 males to 100 females. This ratio is abnormally high and is undoubtedly the result of special factors. Many foreigners who come to this country are unmarried, and a considerable number who are married leave their families in their native land and live with relatives or friends until their families



can be brought to this country or until the men return to their original homes.

*Marital Condition*—The principal facts about the marital condition of the population are shown in Table VII. These percentages do not indicate as much difference between the urban and rural population as might seem to be the case, since it is definitely known that family life plays a very important part in the rural

TABLE VII. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION OVER 15 YEARS OLD CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO MARITAL CONDITION.\*

Marital Condition	Urban	Rural	Rural Farm	Rural Non-Farm
Male:				
Single	33.7	34.5	36.5	32.1
Married	60.5	59.3	57.9	61.1
Widowed	4.3	5.0	4.8	5.3
Female:				
Single	27.8	24.2	25.2	23.0
Married	58.5	65.0	66.0	63.9
Widowed	11.8	9.8	8.1	11.8

\* Source of data *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. III, Part I, p. 19

environment and especially in the farming enterprise. The probabilities are that the marital condition is essential for both rural and urban residents even though the benefits in the latter environment are not so obvious. Consequently marked differences in the percentage that are married do not occur. Such differences as do exist may be attributed in a large measure to the influences characteristic of country life. For example, among the males the lowest percentage married is the rural farm group. It is probable that young men in the country tend to postpone marriage until they have sufficient financial resources to become tenants or until they have enough experience to operate successfully a farm owned by relatives. On the other hand, among the females the highest percentage married is the rural farm group. The reason for this variation has been suggested already: because there is comparatively little opportunity for employment among the rural farm group for women. Consequently they

either marry or seek employment in towns or cities. These same circumstances also account in a large measure for low percentage of widows in the rural farm group. It is ordinarily not possible for a widow to operate a farm, and since there is no other employment she goes to the town or city. Also the proportion of the divorced tends to be lower in the rural farm group than in the urban group. Two circumstances appear to be influential here. One is the fact that the family in the rural environment is less frequently broken by divorce than is the family in an urban environment. Secondly, ordinarily the rural environment is not financially favorable or socially congenial to divorced persons, so they tend to seek refuge in cities.

It has been a common opinion among rural sociologists and other students of rural life that marriages tend to occur at an earlier age among the rural people than among the urban residents. The following table (Table VIII) presents the principal

TABLE VIII. PERCENTAGE OF THE URBAN, RURAL-FARM, AND RURAL NON-FARM POPULATION OVER 15 YEARS OF AGE REPORTED AS MARRIED IN 1930 \*

Age Group	Males			Females		
	Urban	Rural Farm	Rural Non-Farm	Urban	Rural Farm	Rural Non-Farm
15-19	1 3	2 2	2 1	10.2	14 7	16.8
20-24	25 8	29 2	33 7	47.7	57.0	60.8
25-29	59 3	61.9	67 0	70 9	80 3	80 5
30-34	74 9	76.9	79 1	78 6	87 7	85.6
35-39	80.2	83.0	82 0	79.2	89 6	85.1
40-44	81 6	84.2	81.4	77 4	88.9	82.4
45-49	81.8	84 2	80 5	73.7	87 4	79 0
50-54	80.7	83 4	78 8	67.8	83 9	73.6
55-59	79 4	82.0	76.5	61.0	79.7	67 6
60-64	76 0	78.8	73 2	51.4	71.2	58 7
65-69	71.2	74.3	68.7	41.0	60.6	49.2
70-74	63.9	67.6	63 0	29 9	46.4	37.9
75 & over	49 3	52.2	50.4	15.4	23.1	20.6
Unknown	31.1	37.0	28 9	36 8	43.4	30 4
Total	60.5	57.9	61.1	58 5	66.0	63.9

\* Source of Data *Fifteenth Census*, Vol II

facts about the age of marriage in so far as they may be obtained from census data.

The figures do show unquestionably a higher marriage rate in the age periods 15-19 and 20-24. The greatest difference is among the females, where at least 45% more persons in the rural population 15-19 years of age are married than is true for the urban population. However, the differences in this age period are not great, as comparatively few persons in either the urban or rural group marry at these ages. In the period from 20 to 35 rather marked differences occur which indicate that a higher percentage of the males marry. But again the differences in these percentages are not extremely great or the proportion married so high as to indicate a pathological condition. What the differences do reveal is the fact already stated, that the rural environment favors the establishment of family life. Above thirty-five the percentages show that proportionally fewer urban than rural people are married possibly because an unmarried adult can live more conveniently and perhaps more happily in an urban environment.

*Size of Family*—It is generally conceded that rural families are larger than urban families. This statement is based usually either upon observation, the results of surveys in particular areas, or upon census data. Fortunately the Fifteenth Census reports on families in detail and the median as a special form of average is used to indicate size.<sup>10</sup> The results of this calculation are shown by the following figures.

These figures leave no doubt that the rural farm family tends to be larger than the urban family or the rural non-farm family. Since size is based on number of individuals in the family rather than number of children, it may be assumed that the rural farm family usually will have from two to three children. Of course, there will be considerable variation from this figure. Some families will have no children at all whereas others will have as many as eight or more. When the size of family is considered from the standpoint of nativity and color, it is

<sup>10</sup> The median means the midpoint or mid-value in the series. That is, there will be as many cases below the median as above it.

TABLE IX MEDIAN SIZE OF FAMILY.\*

Nativity and Color	All Families	Urban	Rural Farm	Rural Non-Farm
Native White	3 34	3 75	4 00	3 30
Native White Native Parentage	3 37	3 13	4 02	3 33
Foreign or Mixed Parentage	3 74	3 76	4 02	3 32
Negro	3 15	2 70	4 05	2 96
Other races	4 13	3 90	4 71	3 95

\* Source of Data *Fifteenth Census*, Families

significant to note that in the rural farm population families of the white group of native parentage are almost as large as the families of the foreign-born white, and that the negro families are only slightly larger

Numerous conjectures may be made regarding the tendency for the rural family to be larger than the urban family. It has just been shown that a certain proportion of the rural population marries earlier than in the urban population. This tendency increases the possibility of having a greater number of children. Then it is possible that a knowledge of effective means of birth-control is not as widespread in the country as it is among certain population groups in the city. Custom and tradition on the farm favor the rearing of children. But possibly the most important influence of all in creating the difference in size between the urban and rural family is farm life itself. At one time children were considered to be an economic asset to the farmer. It is doubtful if this is true any longer, now that managerial ability and financial resources rather than physical strength tend to determine the success of a farm family. Certainly, however, children are not as much of an economic liability in the country as in the city. They can be reared more easily and with less expense on a farm or in a small town.

*Age Distribution*—Some differences exist between the rural and urban population when comparisons are made of the number in different age groups. The detailed figures are given in Table X. The outstanding fact made evident in this table is

the greater proportion of persons under 20 years of age in the rural population than in the urban population. In every age period up to twenty the rural farm group ranks highest, the rural non-farm second, and the urban group third. Another way to present this relationship would be to say that out of every hundred people under twenty, 34.5 are in the urban group, 47.3 in the rural farm group and 41.3 in the rural non-farm group. If the assumption is made that persons under twenty are dependent or largely so, it is evident that the farm population has a heavier burden in rearing the future generation than have the other two groups. This involves not only expenses such as food, clothing and medical care, which are directly chargeable to the family, but also community expenses such as school facilities, which necessarily are an important item of expenditure. Furthermore, when a certain proportion of these children are old enough, they migrate to cities and contribute to their wealth.

The percentages in Table X for the years 20 to 65 show that the urban population ranks first. Most cities are production centers and consequently demand a population of producers. A population ranking high in producers is likely to have more wealth than one having a relatively high percentage of depend-

TABLE X PERCENTAGE OF RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION IN THE VARIOUS AGE GROUPS, 1930 \*

Age Group	Urban	Rural Farm	Rural Non-Farm
Under 5 years	8.2	11.1	10.5
5-9	9.0	12.5	11.1
10-14	8.6	12.4	9.8
15-19	8.7	11.3	8.9
20-24	9.3	8.1	8.5
25-29	9.0	6.0	7.8
30-34	8.4	5.5	7.1
35-44	15.5	11.4	12.9
45-55	11.2	9.8	9.9
55-64	6.9	6.6	6.9
65-74	3.7	3.7	4.5
75 and over	1.4	1.5	2.1
Unknown	0.1		0.1

\* Source of data. *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. III, part I.

ents. These differences in population account to some extent for the concentration of wealth in cities and the fact that more funds are available, or may be made available, for civic improvements and cultural advancement. The fact that the rural population has a disproportionate number of young people constitutes an unquestioned need on the part of the rural community for financial assistance in maintaining modern schools. Using the census data for a single state, Mr. H. J. Burt calculated that in Missouri for every 500 producers (persons 20-64 years old) in the farmer class there were 500 persons of dependent ages, whereas in the urban population there were 633 persons of producing ages to 367 in the dependent ages. In other words the farmer load in caring for dependents was about 42% heavier than the urban.<sup>11</sup> There will undoubtedly be some variations from this percentage in the various states, but there can be no doubt about the excess burden of the farm population and, to a slightly less extent, of the rural non-farm group in care of dependents. Productive labor on the part of persons under 20 and over 65 would reduce, as Mr. Burt points out, the dependency load for the rural population, but certainly comparatively few of this group are self-supporting. A young person over 16 might become self-supporting and even contribute something to the support of others, but this would likely be offset by expenses which had been incurred previous to the age of sixteen.

It is also worth noting in passing that when the age periods beyond 65 are considered, the rural non-farm population ranks somewhat higher than either the urban or the rural farm population. The chief explanation for this fact is the migration of farmers to towns and villages when they are too old to operate a farm. It is known also that there tends to be a slightly higher percentage of widows in the village population than in the farm population. It is probable that a considerable proportion of these belong in the age groups beyond 65 years. The presence of these persons in rural villages may have a conservative influence on the population and is thought to be one explanation

<sup>11</sup> Henry J. Burt, *The Population of Missouri*, Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 188, pages 83-84

for the conservatism some village communities manifest in regard to community development.

*The Movements of the Rural Population*—Certain movements of the rural population are perennial. First, the movement of families from one farm to another in the same or a nearby locality may be mentioned. Such movements are necessary owing to the expiration of leases, the purchase and sale of farms, and other similar changes. These movements have not been studied in great detail but a few preliminary studies have been made. Forty-two per cent of 319 farm families in Cortland county, New York, had been on the same farm less than five years and 10% of the total number had been on the same farm for one year or less. On the other hand, 42.6% had been on the same farm for ten years or more.<sup>12</sup>

In studying the movement of the open country population in Ohio a study of 1,275 rural families showed that although there was evidence of an increase in mobility the rural population could still be considered very stable. In this sample of 1,275 families 46% of the farm operators were born in the township and 62% in the county where they were living at the time of the survey. Moreover, one-fourth of the families had resided on the same farms since their establishment, one-half in the same township and two-thirds in the same county.<sup>13</sup> In this study there was greater mobility of tenants than of owners. Quite likely this is true of tenants in all parts of the United States. A majority of them are young farmers who, due either to necessity or choice, move from one farm to another until they get enough money to become owners. Some tenants are never able to acquire ownership of land and are obliged to move more or less regularly until they are too old to do farm work. A few farmers remain tenants by choice. The social consequences of population movements of this kind are not necessarily harmful unless the migrants go to a place where

<sup>12</sup> Dwight Sanderson, *A Population Study of Three Townships in Cortland County, New York*, Memoir 11, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N Y

<sup>13</sup> C E Lively and P G Beck, *Movement of Open Country Population in Ohio*, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 467, p. 46

new connections must be established with church, school and other community institutions. These new adjustments are not always quickly made and sometimes never occur.

Second, there is the movement of farms from one section of the country to another. In former times much of this movement was toward the West, where new and cheaper farms were available. As the supply of desirable western lands diminished, the direction of this movement changed from western to the northwestern part of the country, and even into Canada. Also some farmers have moved back to the eastern part of the United States. As a general rule, farmers who seek a new location do so because the price of land is so high in the place where they live that they believe it is more profitable to cultivate cheaper land. In the study of land settlement and colonization in the Great Lakes states, the investigators found that the settlers who had farm experience were a varied group. Some were sons of farmers, others were tenants or men who sold their farms and then bought land in the newer sections of the country.<sup>14</sup>

A third movement of farm population is from the farm to villages and towns. Persons concerned here are apt to be farmers who retire or are on the verge of retirement, or farmers who move to town with their families in order to get cultural advantages unavailable on the farm. Seldom does a young farmer move to town unless he quits farming to enter another occupation. Data showing the circumstances associated with this movement are not plentiful. In a study of the causes and conditions of retirement of one hundred farmers in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, it was discovered that most of them retired between the ages of fifty and fifty-nine years, and that ninety-five of them had been owner-operators.<sup>15</sup> It was also found in a study of the ownership of tenant farms in the United States that the average age at the time of retirement for 7,583 landlords in

<sup>14</sup> *Land Settlement and Colonization in the Great Lakes States*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin 1295, page 26

<sup>15</sup> *Causes and Conditions of Retirement of 100 Retired Farmers Living in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin*, Mimeographed Report, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.



different parts of the country was 53 6 years.<sup>16</sup> In Cedar County, Iowa, the results of a survey of tenantry showed that the majority of 189 landlords who owned farms in the area studied lived from one to eight miles from their farms, usually in nearby towns.<sup>17</sup> The study of the ownership of tenant farms in the United States just referred to gives a statistical basis for the statement that owners who were residents in the same or in adjoining counties held 92 5% of all the properties considered in the investigation.<sup>18</sup>

The movement of farm owners away from their farms is of far-reaching significance. If they follow the practice of going to town just as soon as enough money is available, they are not apt to consider the farm as a permanent abode. To such farmers, the farmstead is a dwelling place to be vacated sooner or later, so there is no great inducement to make modern improvements in the house or on the premises. The practice of early retirement to the village takes the farmer and his family away from the farm when circumstances are most favorable for them to make it modern and attractive. If the family goes far enough away to lose connection with local institutions another loss occurs. Newcomers to the farm can seldom take the place of the persons who leave in church work and other activities of a similar character. More serious still, perhaps, is the migration of the farmer and his family to the town or city to get high school advantages for the children. Movements of this kind drain the community of desirable citizens and increase the difficulty of getting improvements for those who remain. If five out of twenty families who want a consolidated school leave the community because they fail to get it, the problem is increased for the fifteen families that are left.

Migration of farm children to towns and cities constitutes a fourth movement of the farm population. This movement is

<sup>16</sup> Howard A. Turner, *Ownership of Tenant Farms in the United States*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin 1432

<sup>17</sup> G. H. Von Tungeln and Others, *The Social Aspects of Rural Life and Farm Tenancy, Cedar County, Iowa*, Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 217

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, page 22.

discussed in books and periodicals more than any other one. "Why boys leave the farm" is a fascinating question. Its answer is equally illuminating, because many circumstances cause this migration. It seems to be a fact that the farm produces an excess of children. As these children mature they must go where they can find profitable employment. At least, it is fairly certain that they do not remain at home. A study of 357 farm families in Minnesota and 300 in Ohio gives some statistical proof of this statement. In the case of the Minnesota families, 40% of the children who had left home had become farmers and 60% had migrated to town for urban occupations<sup>19</sup> In the case of 196 sons of Ohio families who were away from home, 31% were farmers, 20% laborers, 16% in public service, 14% professional workers, 11% artisans and 8% merchants or dealers<sup>20</sup> In the state of Washington 16% of 1,031 males over sixteen years of age in three rural communities migrated to the city. The corresponding figure for females was slightly higher (18.9%).<sup>21</sup> It would seem, judging by these figures, that a large proportion of the children who leave the farm home enter some occupation in the town or city. Both boys and girls migrate, but probably a greater proportion of girls than boys leaves, as girls who do not marry have less opportunity for desirable employment in rural districts.

Studies made in other parts of the United States at a somewhat later date tend to substantiate the facts just stated. For example in North Carolina a study of 1,703 sons and daughters from 427 farm families in Wake County shows that 48% of the total number had left home. Daughters left in somewhat greater proportions than the sons. Most of those who left were mar-

<sup>19</sup> C. C. Zimmerman, *The Migration to Towns and Cities*, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XXXII, Nov. 1926, pages 454-455.

<sup>20</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick and H. W. Hawthorne, *Sources and Uses of Income Among 300 Farm Families of Vinton, Jackson, and Meigs Counties, Ohio, 1926 A Preliminary Report*, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture

<sup>21</sup> A. A. Smick and F. R. Yoder, *A Study of Farm Migration in Selected Communities in the State of Washington*, Washington Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 233

ried<sup>22</sup> The sons entered numerous occupations. About 45% were farmers, 10% were in general business and from 10 to 14% approximately were skilled laborers. Numerous other occupations were engaged in, but no one was followed by more than 7 or 8% of the migrants. Half of the daughters who left were farmers' wives and an additional fourth of the owners' daughters and a third of the tenants' daughters were housewives in town. The remainder followed a great variety of occupations<sup>23</sup> In Ohio an analysis of the migration of children from 1,275 families shows that the average age at which males started for themselves was 21 years and for females, 20.1 years. At the time of starting, 41% of the male migrants became farmers. Of those entering non-agricultural occupations 45% became laborers and 14% entered other occupations.<sup>24</sup> Also in Connecticut 68% of the sons who left rural homes from six towns (townships) were engaged in 70 or more non-farming occupations<sup>25</sup>

So much for the data concerning the migration of children from rural families. They show that migration from the parental home is a logical step in the cycle of family life and that the young persons leaving home must seek an occupation whereby they may earn a livelihood and, eventually, establish a home of their own. A considerable number are able to do this and remain in the country, but others are forced by circumstances or are motivated by choice to find employment which may seem more remunerative or attractive in cities. Some may be much better adapted to city work, and it would be unfortunate both for the individual and for society to sacrifice the career of a possible good engineer or teacher by insisting that such an individual remain on the farm where he might become only a medium or low-grade farmer. Vocational guidance is needed

<sup>22</sup> W. A. Anderson and C. P. Loomis, *Migration Among Sons and Daughters of White Farmers in Wake County, North Carolina, 1929*, North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 275

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, pages 17 and 18

<sup>24</sup> P. G. Beck and C. E. Lively, *Movement of Open Country Population in Ohio*, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 489

<sup>25</sup> J. L. Hypes, Victor A. Rapport and Eileen M. Kennedy, *Connecticut Youth and Farming Occupations*, Connecticut Agricultural College, Bulletin 182.

just as much for farm children as it is for children in the city. Sometimes children born on farms and in small towns are outstandingly successful in other kinds of work. The fact that numerous notables listed in *Who's Who* were born in the country furnishes an adequate proof of this statement.

Some young people leave the farm chiefly because the brilliantly lighted streets of the city with their many and varied places of amusement have almost an irresistible attraction for them. Comparisons between the city and the country are frequently made and almost always the more desirable aspects of the city are compared with the less desirable aspects of the country. One must live in the country to appreciate its advantages, and this is true for the city as well. Too frequently the farm boy thinks only of the unpleasant experiences he has had in farming, because these are most vivid in his memory. If the advantageous aspects of farming and the opportunity that farm life offers were properly interpreted to farm boys, not as many of them as now do so would give up farming because they "see nothing in it". Boys' and girls' agricultural clubs and also vocational agriculture in high schools have given many youngsters a new vision of farm life.

Occasionally a bright lad will be more progressive than his father in his ideas about the management of the farm. He has had opportunities to study aspects of farming that his father never heard of, and it is only logical for him to wish to adopt the newer farm practices. It is a serious matter if the father fails to grasp the situation sufficiently to direct the boy's interest in a constructive manner. If he tries to repress this interest, the results are apt to be disastrous so far as the boy's career as a farmer is concerned. Lack of co-operation between father and son must be listed as one of the reasons why some boys migrate to the city.

There are many social consequences in the cityward migration of youth. A general, though unproved, assumption exists, that the more intelligent and progressive young people leave the farm. It is further concluded from this assumption that gradually the farm population is being depleted of its best stock, and that

inferior grades of people will eventually compose the farm population. There is no certainty that these propositions are true. Ability must always be considered in relation to environment, and if the environmental influences are such that they develop a progressive and socially efficient farm population, farm people may continue to be a desirable type, no matter who goes to the city. This has been true in the Belleville (New York) community.

"It was found on investigation that not only were there strong persistent farm families to rally around the academy as the central institution, but that these strong families were knit together by the marriage of their young people who became acquainted while attending the academy."<sup>26</sup> In fact some evidence seems to indicate that usually it is the families who have attained the more desirable economic and cultural standards that remain in the country. Dr. Wilson Gee, after studying the qualitative nature of rural depopulation in Santuc Township, South Carolina, comes to the conclusion that the most encouraging fact revealed by the data was the increase of the middle class and that under favorable conditions a certain portion of this class may advance to the upper class. The heaviest loss in this community was among the lower classes, which Dr. Gee thinks was advantageous from the standpoint of the community.<sup>27</sup> Also the study of farm migration in selected communities in the State of Washington furnished no ground for the fear sometimes expressed that the migration to the city is selective in that the more desirable and capable individuals migrate to the city.<sup>28</sup> The study of migration in Ohio showed that the majority of boys who became farmers belonged to families that were stable and successful farmers.<sup>29</sup>

The question of the quality of the migrating group from

<sup>26</sup> Emily Hoag, *The National Influence of a Single Farm Community*, United States Department of Agriculture, Bulletin 984

<sup>27</sup> Wilson Gee, *The Qualitative Nature of Rural Depopulation in Santuc Township, South Carolina*, South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 287

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p 41

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p 46

rural areas is an important one. So far there has been no evidence presented to indicate that the cityward movement is unduly selective in favor of the city, in spite of the fact that common observation and opinion seem to point to the opposite conclusion. If rural life can be improved to the point where economic security and recreational and cultural advantages are within the reach of rural residents, there need be no fear of excessive migration in either quantity or quality from rural areas. "Folk Depletion," as Professor Ross calls it, is quite as much a result of bad euthenics as it is of bad eugenics.

A second consequence to be noted in connection with this migration to the city, is the fact that the country population must bear the expense of rearing and educating a considerable portion of its children, who, when they reach the productive period of life, leave the farm. Cities reap whatever benefits may accrue from the efforts of these migrants and the country for the most part loses them. A well-balanced plan of financing public schools in rural districts should include some support from cities, because cities, rather than the country, benefit directly from educating the country boys and girls who become city residents. Recognition of this fact has already been made in some states which have enacted laws to subsidize from public funds rural consolidated schools meeting certain specified requirements.

Cityward migration of youth is a drain on the country in still another way. Not only do young people themselves go, but eventually they take some wealth with them. If there are four boys in a family and three of them go to the city, the boy who keeps the farm must eventually pay the other three for their share in the estate. In other words, three-fourths of the farm must be paid for by the son who keeps it. If the heirs live in the city, they and the city are benefited. No one knows how much money is drained out of country communities in this way. It surely is a significant sum. If this wealth could be kept in the country and spent there in a wise manner, better living conditions and more social advantages in rural districts would result.

How long will the farm population continue to produce this

excess number of children, and undergo the expense which is incurred thereby? No one knows. If a knowledge of successful means of birth-control should become as common among farm people as it apparently is in the city, the whole situation may be changed within a generation. It has been suggested in at least one farm journal that the solution of our present farm problem consists in having farm families of not more than two children.<sup>30</sup> In that event there would be no excess of people in the country. Young farmers would inherit all, or a large portion of their farms, and instead of paying off persons who share in the inheritance, they would be at liberty to spend the money in improving the farm and the locality around it.

The primary purpose of the farm population in the economic sense is to produce food for the rest of the population. If machinery and improved methods of farming enable fewer people to produce the amount of food which the market demands, then more people can be released for other kinds of work. There is no virtue in having great numbers of people on farms for the mere sake of numbers. An excess number of farmers causes over-production and, on the average, lower incomes for farmers. Then the farm population suffers, just as do people in any overcrowded occupation. Nearly everyone would now agree that the farm population should have the advantages which are necessary for clean, wholesome, healthful living and efficient citizenship. Obviously, the attainment of this standard involves many factors besides a proper balance between number of farmers and other groups in the population, but it is certain that an excess of population definitely and continuously prevents its realization. The quality rather than the quantity of farm population must necessarily be the primary concern of farm leaders and statesmen in the future.

*Countryward Migration*—Some people migrate from cities to the country. But in normal times the number is not large enough to offset the loss that the rural population suffers by migration to cities. A report from the Bureau of Agricultural

<sup>30</sup> G. H. Von Tungeln, *The Solution—Two Children?*, Farm Journal, June, 1927

Economics released in March 1934 summarizes in a numerical way the movement to and from farms since 1920. The figures are presented in Table XI.

TABLE XI MOVEMENTS TO AND FROM FARMS (In thousands).

(Births and deaths are not taken into account)

Year	Persons Leaving Farms for Cities	Persons Arriving at Farms	Net Movement from Farms to Cities
1920	896	560	336
1921	1,323	759	564
1922	2,252	1,115	1,137
1923	2,162	1,355	807
1924	2,068	1,581	487
1925	2,038	1,336	702
1926	2,334	1,427	907
1927	2,162	1,705	457
1928	2,120	1,698	422
1929	2,081	1,604	477
1930	1,723	1,740	* 17
1931	1,469	1,683	* 214
1932	1,011	1,544	* 533
1933	1,178	951	227

\* Net movement from cities to farms

Apparently, migration to the city is a normal process and may be expected to continue as long as there is a demand for workers in the city and a surplus of workers in the country. The reverse movement occurred when there was extreme unemployment in cities. Then people sought refuge in the country, where living expenses were lower and where there was a possibility of producing food. Many of the country migrants who had recently gone to the city returned to their original home to reside with their parents. Numerous families moved to the country and made their residence in abandoned farm houses or in villages. By 1934 there was evidence that this movement to the country was subsiding, partly because all the city residents who could go to the country had done so, and partly because there was some increase of employment in cities.



Comparatively little information is available concerning the persons who move from the city to the country. A preliminary study made by the United States Department of Agriculture reports that of 1,167 persons who left city, town or village for the farm, 87.6% had previous experience on the farm.<sup>31</sup> Previous farm experience is probably an important factor in determining whether a person considers migration from city to country. Many migrants from farms, who have to earn their livelihood in the city by manual labor, find the task exceedingly difficult, and conclude that the necessities of life can be procured more easily and certainly in the country.

On the other hand, some persons who go from the city to the farm are entirely ignorant of farming and the essential requisites for success there. People of this type are often poor managers and cannot handle machinery and livestock. They are unable to judge the value of a farm very well and may buy land at a price much higher than its correct value. Such people, as a rule, do not stay on the farm very long. After becoming poorer and wiser, they dispose of their farm and again seek their fortune in the city. City-bred people who go to farms represent a varied lot. Some of them are worn out and without real hope. Others are hopeful and aggressive. They may know little about farming but their intelligence and experience in business enables them to become good managers and hence successful farmers.

What the future trend in countryward migration will be is a matter of prophecy. If science continues to play an increasing rôle in farming, then certainly the farmer without a sound training in the science of agriculture will be handicapped, and less likely to succeed as a farmer. Farming may gradually take on the characteristics of a profession, in the sense that persons who operate farms will have to be trained to do so. In that event the quality of farm people may be slowly improved, for only people with training and ability can then be successful.

<sup>31</sup> *Analysis of Migration of Population to and from Farms*, Mimeographed Report, United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Gradually also, a more distinct farm labor class with less ability and training may emerge to do the routine types of farm work that involve hand labor. It is quite possible that in the event the Subsistence Homestead Plan provided in the National Recovery Act of 1933 becomes generally effective there will be a considerable movement from urban to rural or semi-rural communities, because it is the purpose of this plan to provide aid in the redistribution of the overbalanced population in industrial centers to plots of land consisting of from one to five acres. On this land it is expected that the family may produce much of the food which it will need for its own use. The families living on these homesteads will be classed in the rural population, although many of them will have more characteristics of a suburban resident than of a farmer.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Define the terms *urban*, *rural*, *rural farm*, and *rural non-farm*.
2. Has the decline in the rural population been a relative or an absolute decline?
3. What circumstances contribute to the growth of the rural population?
4. How does the presence of urban centers affect the growth of urban population?
5. What circumstances may produce a decrease in the rural population of any given area?
6. Explain how changes in the population affect community organizations and institutions.
7. What proportion of the rural population is classified as "farm population"?
8. What benefits may a rural population derive from the presence of a large urban population in a state?
9. Compare the rural farm and rural non-farm population with the urban population in regard to the color and nativity of the people.
10. Under what conditions do foreign-born groups constitute problems in rural community organization?
11. Explain the way in which the presence of Negroes or other races constitute problems in rural areas.

12. What circumstances contribute to the differences in the marital rates between the urban and rural populations?
13. How may the difference in the median size of rural and urban families be explained?
14. Describe the differences in the age distribution of the rural and urban population
15. What are the implications of these differences from the standpoint of (a) education, (b) dependency?
16. Enumerate the movements of the rural population.
17. What are the social consequences of the cityward migration of youth?
18. What circumstances cause people to migrate from cities to farms and villages?

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## CHAPTER IV

### GROUPS IN THE RURAL POPULATION

One of the most common concepts in sociology is the group. Contact, a place or physical basis, homogeneity, structure, a dynamic or motivating interest, and number or size of units are some of the factors basic to social groups.<sup>1</sup> They exist whenever a number of people respond to a stimulus or sets of stimuli more or less simultaneously.<sup>2</sup> Groups are numerous in rural society, and a knowledge of their influence is fundamental in understanding rural life. They determine an individual's behavior to a very great extent. In fact, there exists no such thing as a person entirely unaffected by group relationships.

The idea has been prevalent for many years that the farmer is master of his own destiny. It has been earnestly argued that, if a man had the physical and mental capacity, his success as a farmer and fitness as a citizen would be assured. Such a view seems inadequate now when the major trends in rural life prove that group influences dominate the course of human behavior in hundreds of instances. The co-operative movement, for example, is based on the principle that groups of farmers working together can achieve more than farmers working individually. Many items which distinctly modify the farmer's standard of living are secured only by group action either through legal means or voluntary effort. Hospital service, good schools and churches, improved roads may be mentioned as illustrations. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly evident that membership in groups, or at least participation in group activity, is decidedly socializing in its effects. Progressive

<sup>1</sup> Warren Brown, *Social Groups*, The Faithhorn Pub Co., page 8

<sup>2</sup> L. L. Bernard, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, Henry Holt & Co., page

farmers are members of several groups. The unprogressive ones remain aloof from church, Grange, Farm Bureau and neighborhood or community activities. Agricultural extension workers now know that their message is most effective and far-reaching when they can work with groups. Participation in group activity makes the individual susceptible to new ideas and influences.

Membership in some groups, such as the family and state, is involuntary. A person is born into them. Other groups are voluntary in nature, and membership in them is determined by the individual's qualifications and interest. Groups vary in their permanence and the purposes which they accomplish. Their classification is a knotty problem and probably this is a matter which logically may be left to the social theorist. Many scholars have tried to get a scientific, workable classification, but from certain points of view, this is still in the offing. Professor Cooley's division of groups into primary and secondary categories is helpful, yet the line of distinction between the two is not always clear, as some groups will have the characteristics of both a primary and a secondary group. More recently it has been suggested that there are three major classes of groups (1) those which are determined primarily by physical presence, like a group at a football game; (2) those which are organized for specific purposes, such as a local association of business or professional men, and (3) those which are symbolically defined.<sup>3</sup> Groups of the latter type, in addition to performing certain definite functions, give the members a recognized status in society. An example of such a group would be the family, or perhaps the church. Classifications may be made in other ways. For instance, groups may be classified according to their degree of permanency or the purposes they strive to accomplish. In the present chapter no formal classification will be presented. The important groups in the rural population will be designated by the names which are in current use.

*The Family*—The first group found in the rural population is the family group. Not only is this group the most numerous;

<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. VII, p. 179.

it is also first in the number and variety of those contacts which individuals meet in group situations. It is a common practice to speak of the family as a primary group, that is, one wherein face-to-face contacts and personal influences prevail among the various members. In rural life the family group has always been very important. It is essential to the farm business, and because of the comparative isolation of the farm family it assumes a special importance in controlling the lives of its members. While it may be accepted as a working principle that a neighborhood or a community is something different than the total of the number of families belonging to it, the fact remains that socialized families with high ideals are indispensable in maintaining progressive neighborhoods or communities. A few backward, non-co-operative families can almost destroy neighborhood or community life. A few progressive ones can make it.

*The Neighborhood*—The neighborhood is a group of families living in close proximity to one another and having frequent face-to-face contacts. It is an example of a primary group. In rural districts a dozen to two dozen families commonly compose the neighborhood. It is the first group in point of size (larger than the family) existing in the country. Many influences lead to its formation and perpetuity. In a study of rural primary (neighborhood) groups in Wisconsin, it was found that such factors as common former residence of the members, economic purposes, nationality bonds, social purposes and topography were most important in holding neighborhoods together.<sup>4</sup> Neighborhoods usually grow up around a church, school or country store. Frequently all three are located at the same place, and each does its part to make the group cohesive. Mutual aid activities are carried on by neighborhood groups. In pioneer neighborhoods, log-rollings, barn-raising and husking bees were commonly participated in by the people. Social events were frequent during those early days. The old-fashioned singing schools, spelling bees and parties supplied a wholesome

<sup>4</sup> J. H. Kolb, *Rural Primary Groups*, Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 51

means of social intercourse that some modern neighborhoods might well envy.

Gradually, however, changes in rural life tended to minimize especially the economic importance of the neighborhood. Farm machinery came into general use, whereupon each farmer became less dependent on other farmers in getting his work done. At the present time the assistance of neighbors is not needed except to help in threshing, silo-filling and, occasionally, similar kinds of work. As work on a neighborhood basis diminished in importance, the social activities provided by the neighborhood gradually disappeared. The district school closed its doors when the consolidated school came; the cross-roads store decreased in significance as an agency for the development of neighborhood interest. In many places the country church ceased to be an important influence, because people preferred churches in nearby towns. All of these influences favored neighborhood disintegration.

Today one may find in certain sections of the country remnants of these neighborhood groups. Often an old school-house, church and church-yard remain as mute evidence of an earlier neighborhood life. Sometimes only a single activity of the former type will remain. For example, the church may hold services at stated intervals, or a club may be organized by families living in close proximity to each other. In newer sections of the country, the neighborhood still exists much as it did in pioneer days. Especially is this apt to be true if its nucleus is a district school. In a study of 37 rural neighborhood groups in Whitman County, Oregon, the country school was the center for fifteen of them.<sup>5</sup> Studies of neighborhood groups elsewhere also show that the district school plays a prominent part in their maintenance.

It is now recognized that neighborhood groups are too small to maintain, in a satisfactory way, many of the activities that they previously maintained. Some advantages in trade, education, health services and social contacts are obtainable only with

<sup>5</sup> E. A. Taylor and F. R. Yoder, *Rural Social Organization in Whitman County*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Pullman, Washington, Bulletin 203



more people than compose a neighborhood. It is necessary, therefore, for neighborhoods to co-operate with other groups in order to secure these advantages. This merging of activities and interests with other groups may cause the original neighborhood to lose its identity. But it is doubtful if the act of neighboring, in the sense of having frequent and wholesome face-to-face contacts, will pass away. Such contacts are necessary and normal. People crave them, and unless some other medium is devised through which they can be obtained, the rudiments of a neighborhood will probably remain. Any plan of social organization must take into account the rôle of the neighborhood. It may be possible to place neighboring on a more organized basis than it has been in the past, even though its very nature precludes any great degree of formality. At the present time there is a recrudescence of interest in the neighborhood. It has become increasingly apparent that the neighborhood has an important influence in the formation of character and the maintenance of a wholesome personality. It is also apparent that a majority of neighborhoods are persisting rather than disappearing.<sup>6</sup> What at one time was thought to be a definite and continuous trend toward the extinction of the neighborhood appears to be rather the disappearance of certain neighborhoods or neighborhood functions, occasioned by changes in the density of the rural population and improved means of transportation.

*The Community*—Another group that has become extremely important in recent years is the community. The meaning of the term is not entirely clear. Sometimes it is used in a general way to imply common activities and interests of a group without definite reference to its geographical location. At other times it is used to indicate a group having one or more common activities and experiences, and occupying a definite area. Dr. Sanderson, after making an exhaustive study of the concept of the community and numerous statements which are used to indicate its meaning, arrived at the following definition: "A

<sup>6</sup> Brunner and Kolb, *Rural Social Trends*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., page 68, 1933.

rural community consists of the social interaction of the people and their institutions in a local area in which they live on dispersed farmsteads and in a hamlet or village which forms the center of their common activities.”<sup>7</sup> The essential elements of a community are first of all that it shall consist of enough people to maintain local institutions and organizations; second, that these people shall have common activities and interests.<sup>8</sup> It is a significant fact that each community tends to develop certain characteristic customs and traditions and folk-ways. No two communities are exactly alike. Consequently no two will respond in exactly the same way to programs of community development. This fact makes the need for leadership inevitable, because it is one task of the leader to adapt principles and theories of community progress to the particular community in which he may be living.

The importance of the community is sometimes under-estimated, because it appears to be the individual rather than the community which ultimately determines social progress. But this is not really true since it is from his community that the individual secures a major portion of his attitudes and ideals regarding the world in which he lives. The community is much more stable than any particular individual. It has a longer period of existence and can dominate his activities. An individual makes his contribution to the stream of community life, but unless an unusual combination of circumstances occurs, the course of this stream or the rate of its current will not be greatly affected. This fact in no sense obliterates the individual. It merely means that the characteristics of community life represent the shifting and winnowing of generations. It is the duty of the individual to study these various aspects of community life as he participates in them and then to strive to make such changes and improvements as experience and, whenever possible, scientific analysis warrant. In rural areas communities spring up around trade centers, churches and schools. Con-

<sup>7</sup> Dwight Sanderson, *The Rural Community*, Ginn & Co., 1932, page 481.

<sup>8</sup> C. R. Hoffer, *Understanding the Community*, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 36, pages 616-624

tacts in these groups are frequently of a face-to-face type, though they are not necessarily so, for contacts may also be of the indirect sort. The community ordinarily represents a larger group than the neighborhood. A school community might include several neighborhood groups. Communities have become of increasing importance in recent years, because a community is large enough, or may become large enough, to secure modern institutions and services. This group is as vital to modern rural life as was the neighborhood in pioneer times.

One of the most common types of communities found in rural areas is the trade community. Such a community consists of the town and the trading territory adjacent to it. Upon close examination of trade area boundaries, however, it appears that they vary with each particular class of commodities. The grocery trade area will not be identical to the clothing trade area, nor the furniture area with that of hardware. Different types of stores require varying numbers of people to support them.<sup>9</sup> Hence trade communities vary with each particular class of commodities. One of the important problems in rural organization at the present time is the planning of trade communities in such a manner that farmers may get adequate trading advantages for all kinds of commodities, and yet not be subject to the disadvantages associated with trade areas that are too small. Trading service in groceries, hardware and other similar articles are abundant, possibly over-supplied, but trading service for goods less frequently demanded, or less staple, are inadequate. If this inadequacy is corrected, small trade communities will have to co-operate in supporting one or more larger ones, rather than compete with them. It seems probable that a town having a population of approximately 5,000 with a trade area of smaller towns surrounding it, is necessary for a fairly complete trading community.

A second type of community occurring in rural areas is the institutional community. It is formed around consolidated schools, churches, hospitals and other institutions which meet

<sup>9</sup> *Services of Rural Trade Centers in the Distribution of Farm Supplies*, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 249

fundamental human needs. The number of people necessary for communities of this type varies greatly. It has been suggested that the population requirement of a high school is approximately 1,250 people and of a hospital 6,000 people<sup>10</sup> Churches vary in the number of people supporting them, but probably 1,000 people per church is a satisfactory number.<sup>11</sup> There is no arbitrary rule regarding where the center for communities of this type may be located. Usually it is in a town, though open-country churches and open-country schools are not uncommon.

Integration of the programs of various institutional communities is not easily secured. It involves not only formulating objectives of each program to promote social progress, but in addition a co-ordination of the objectives is necessary. A consideration of this co-ordination belongs primarily in the field of social organization, and therefore will be discussed in another part of this book. It is sufficient to state here that the realm of human needs and interests is great enough to demand emphasis from many points of view. All fundamental values in life must be met, but this cannot be done unless the work of various institutions and organizations in any given area is well co-ordinated.

*Special Purpose Groups*—Another type of group that exists almost universally in rural areas is the group organized to promote a special purpose or a number of related purposes. Groups of this kind are organized in a formal way, hold regular meetings and seek to promote one or more definite objectives. A partial classification of such organized groups includes the following:

I. Religious Organizations.

- (1) Churches.
- (2) Sunday Schools.
- (3) Men's Religious Organizations.

<sup>10</sup> *Service Institutions for Town and Country*, Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 66

<sup>11</sup> Morse and Brunner, in their study of the church in 179 rural counties, suggest this number per church as a norm.

- (4) Women's Religious Organizations.
- (5) Young People's Religious Organizations.
- II. Educational Organizations.
  - (1) Parent-Teacher's Organizations.
  - (2) Study Clubs.
  - (3) Boys' and Girls' Clubs.
- III. Business and Professional Organizations.
  - (1) Business Men's Organizations
  - (2) Farmers' Organizations.
  - (3) Co-operative Organizations.
- IV. Fraternal Organizations
  - (1) Lodges.
- V Patriotic Organizations.
  - (1) American Legion and other organizations of similar character.
- VI. Social Organizations
  - (1) Organizations intended to promote social intercourse such as card clubs, music and art clubs, etc.
- VII Juvenile Organizations.
  - (1) Boy Scouts.
  - (2) Campfire Girls.
- VIII. Miscellaneous Organizations.

An actual count of all active organizations in ten town-country communities in central Michigan showed that the number varied from 83 in a community having a population center of approximately 4,000 to 14 in a community with a small center of only 500. There was not, however, a definite relationship between the size of the community and the number of organizations which it had.<sup>12</sup> The number appeared to vary rather with the customs, traditions and interests of the community. The total number of organizations in the ten communities, classified by type, follows:

<sup>12</sup> C R Hoffer and Margaret Cawood, *Services of Institutions and Organizations in Town-Country Communities*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 208 (Table I, appendix).

Religious Organizations	181
Organizations sponsored by school	13
Lodges	58
Study Clubs	18
Farmers' Organizations	19
Patriotic Organizations	15
Civic Organizations	22
Extension Service Group	41
National Juvenile Group	23

The number of religious organizations, or organizations sponsored by churches, may appear surprising, though it is well to keep in mind that one or more churches exists in every community and that usually each church will sponsor organizations for the various age and sex groups. All of the organizations except 12 Junior church organizations, 19 Young People's religious organizations, and the 23 National Juvenile organizations were designed for adults. The number of members in these organizations varied greatly, depending somewhat upon the size of the community and more especially upon the purpose or purposes for which the group was organized.

There is no rule or standard to determine the optimum number of organizations needed in a particular area, because so many circumstances influence their formation and existence. Sometimes an organization develops out of a recognized need on the part of the people for an activity or service. At other times organizations are formed because it is fashionable to have them. Still others are promoted by some one living outside the area who wishes to develop a particular interest. All of these circumstances may explain the origin of an organization. Whether it takes root and grows is quite a different matter. Few are kept alive and active unless they meet some real need of their members. Constant adaptation and adjustment are necessary. The most important fact about an organization is not its name or its formal objectives, but its accomplishments. Few organizations have their field of activity so rigidly defined that it is impossible for them to meet a wide variety of human needs. Very likely any specific need may be met by different organizations. Local

circumstances exert a great influence in this connection. Ordinarily though, when an organization scatters its energies over too wide a field, the results are ineffective. Success is more certain if it works intensively on a few major purposes. The problem of securing the most advantageous number and variety of organizations is one that confronts people everywhere. It is a major problem in social organization.

*Occupational Groups*—On the basis of occupation several groups may be recognized in rural areas. The most common one is the farmer group. It includes a wide variety of workers, ranging from gardeners who till small plots of land, to the managers of large farms. It is the largest single occupational group in many communities. This group is frequently unorganized, although as the Grange, the co-operative movement, and the Farm Bureau, have developed, its identity has become more firmly established.

A second group that may be very clearly distinguished on the basis of occupation in rural districts is the business group. This includes all men engaged in business in rural trade centers. Its size will vary with the population of the town and the number of businesses in it. Ordinarily, in a town of 1,000 population, there will be fifty or more persons whose interests may be identified with business men. The group has considerable cohesiveness and, frequently, one or more organizations to promote its interests. Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis Clubs, and others are examples of such organizations.

Persons engaged in professional pursuits constitute a third group. Lawyers, doctors, dentists, ministers and teachers may be included in this category. It is not a large group because the rural town and country around it do not demand the services of many people who follow professional pursuits. But some professional men are found in almost every town. They are not often organized on a distinctly occupational basis; instead they join business men's organizations. Other occupational groups found in the rural population are artisans, clerical workers of various kinds and laborers who are employed in towns and on farms. These groups are seldom organized, and as a

general rule do not have a great deal of solidarity. The farm labor group, especially, is an unstable one because its personnel is constantly changing. Some farm laborers intend to do farm work as an occupation and remain in the country, but many others are workers who come to the farm during the summer and return to the towns and cities in winter.

By far the two most commonly recognized and discussed occupational groups in the country are the farmers and the business men. Influences of occupation create a rather marked distinction between these two groups. Their work is different and the experiences each one has tend to develop attitudes that are dissimilar. Sometimes the differences are so great that conflicts arise. These groups have many interests in common, but apparently it requires more thought and a greater degree of abstraction to see interdependencies than to see differences. A recognition of mutual relationships is necessary in order to have co-operation rather than conflict between business men and farmers.

*Nationality Groups*—Nationality often furnishes the basis for the formation of groups. It was noted in the previous chapter that foreign persons and their near descendants, as a rule, do not isolate themselves from other members of their nationality. Consequently, the majority of persons in many neighborhoods and communities will often belong to some one nationality. These groups exhibit a fairly high degree of cohesiveness. They have their own churches and sometimes, even, their own schools. They tend to be somewhat clannish in social affairs, and frequently have social events that resemble those in their native land. Such groups were numerous a generation or two ago when many immigrants went to farms. Gradually, as the older persons passed away and the younger ones adopted American ways, they have decreased in number, though they still exist in many parts of the country. Recently the employment of foreigners to perform various kinds of farm labor, such as work in sugar-beet fields, has produced a new crop of these nationality groups in the rural districts.



*Legal Groups*—Another group to be considered is the legal group. Some persons may be inclined to question the existence of such groups, because their identity is determined so largely by territory or place of residence, rather than by social cohesiveness. Yet, for some purposes these groups are socially significant and possess a certain amount of autonomy.

A very common group in rural areas possessing legal identity is composed of people living in a single school district. The district for the ordinary one-room school contains four square miles of territory, though in some parts of the country it is larger. People living in the school district have a certain jurisdiction over the school, and, as was noted in connection with the discussion of neighborhoods, frequently develop other bonds of interest. Consolidated school districts may include from ten to fifty square miles of territory, more in some of the western states. Educational interests are effective in holding people together, so this group is often a medium through which many activities of a community character are initiated.

Residents in a township constitute another legal group. The township is a territorial unit ordinarily containing thirty-six square miles.<sup>13</sup> In the South and Far West this unit has not been socially significant, but in other parts of the country it is an important civic unit.<sup>14</sup> The township has certain jurisdiction in road building, levying taxes, maintenance of schools and other affairs. In recent years many of these duties have been absorbed by other governmental agencies, especially the county. Hence, people living in the township manifest fewer characteristic group activities than they formally did. In a few instances where township halls have been built to serve as a center for social activities, the township group develops a marked degree of unity and community spirit. Also, if a consolidated school district includes a major part of the township, then the township group becomes

<sup>13</sup> K. H. Porter, *County and Township Government in the United States*, The Macmillan Company, page 60

<sup>14</sup> In some of the New England States the more densely populated part of the township is not incorporated as a town or village, but the entire area constitutes one government unit and is known as the "town"

practically identical with the school group and a considerable amount of cohesiveness occurs

The people living in a single county constitute a third legal group. The average county includes several hundred square miles of territory. It is the largest legal unit in rural areas having power to carry on activities of a local nature. Several important services previously performed by smaller units, such as the township, are now under the jurisdiction of counties. The supervision of schools and roads are examples. The people in a county frequently develop a high degree of mutual interest and carry on many activities in a co-operative way. The average county contains sufficient population and taxable property to support many services that otherwise would not be obtainable. It will probably increase in importance as a social unit in the future. County organizations of various kinds are now common.

An incorporated town (one with a population of less than 2,500) represents another rural legal group. This group is found in all states, except in a few cases where state laws do not provide for the incorporation of a town. When incorporated, a town may tax itself for desirable improvements and services which, however, are neither needed or demanded by people living outside its limits. The town builds its schools, has its own fire apparatus and its own municipal buildings. Incorporation sets the town apart, legally, from the rural territory surrounding it. Consequently if the country population surrounding a town cannot obtain services such as those mentioned above gratuitously, it is obliged to pay the town a certain price for them. Although farm people frequently come to town to transact business or for other purposes, their relationships to it are not legally recognized.<sup>15</sup> These circumstances are not favorable to the development of friendly attitudes between town and country, nor to the support of institutions used by all groups in the community.

The town group can more easily maintain its identity and work for its own welfare than can the rural group. Incorporation clothes the town with legal power and sets up governmental machinery to nurture and protect its interests. The rural

<sup>15</sup> C. J. Galpin, *Rural Life*, D. Appleton-Century Co., page 93

group is not so well organized. Even when co-operation between town and country groups is highly developed, legal impediments make it difficult to get the town and country to support community enterprises by taxation. Gradually, in diverse ways, laws are being made to overcome the barriers created by town corporations when matters of taxation are involved.<sup>16</sup> North Carolina permits town and country groups having community interests to incorporate as a single unit. Wisconsin has its Community Center Act permitting town and country to co-operate for the purpose of having a community center building. The zoning system of taxation has been proposed, but not yet generally accepted. The task of removing legal barriers between town and country groups is still far from complete.

*District or State-Wide Groups*—In addition to the groups discussed in this chapter which may exist in any particular community independently of groups or organizations in other communities, there have developed in recent years a number of district or state wide groups. Membership in such groups may be secured by individuals separately or by a federation of local units. The various livestock breeders' associations are examples of the former, while the federation of local co-operative associations into a district or state association represent the latter type. The necessity for such groups has increased in recent years, as agriculture has passed from a self-sufficing to a commercial basis. If the farmer produces for the market, it is obvious that the activities and interests of other farmers producing similar products are important. A common understanding and a common program are desirable and, often, necessary. The Farm Bureau has been designed to meet this need, though the Grange tried to accomplish this objective as early as the 1880's. Such groups broaden the perspective of their members and help to focus attention on the common problems which farmers have as a class. They are, nevertheless, peculiarly dependent upon the quality of the personality of the farmer and the progressiveness

<sup>16</sup> *Proceedings of the American Country Life Association*, 1920, pages 117-126.

of the community in which he lives. For example, it was found in a study of the Farm Bureau of California that the farm family and the rural community were of more importance in the determination of the structure of this organization than any one farm commodity or economic function.<sup>17</sup> It is a significant fact that an "overhead" organization seldom succeeds unless its program in local communities meets with favorable conditions. These conditions are not only a recognized need for the program but also an attitude of progress and co-operation on the part of people for whom the program is planned. It is an error to think that, just because a program is needed in a certain community, it will be accepted by the people and developed successfully.

*The Growth of Secondary Groups*—Recent changes in rural life have given rise to many secondary groups, such as those just mentioned. In some respects these groups seem to have a predominant influence in rural life. Primary groups, like the family, are always important, but they are dependent to a certain extent upon secondary group organizations. Farmers are constantly being urged to organize in order to achieve some of the goals upon which the very security and perpetuity of a wholesome farm life depend. And they are organizing! Recently farm women have put forth an increased effort through the Farm Bureau and other organizations to develop a program of improved housekeeping and home-making. Some problems that rural people have to solve necessitate the action of secondary groups.

In the meantime primary groups will continue to have great influence on individuals, especially during the early period of life. Constantly, the relationship of primary groups to secondary groups must be made clear. Otherwise conflict will arise; individuals will be influenced by competing sets of stimuli, and chaos will result. The family, for example, cannot successfully teach obedience to law, while secondary groups, such as the state,

<sup>17</sup> E. D. Tetreau, *The Objectives and Activities of the California Farm Bureau*, California Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 563.

permit law violations. Nor can secondary groups effectively teach honesty, tolerance, international good-will or any other virtues, unless these attributes are explained and integrated with the objectives which primary groups emphasize.

Secondary groups must communicate through the printed page and the radio. Ideas carried in magazines and newspapers and broadcasted over the radio are certain to influence greatly the thought and actions of rural people. If these channels of information can be kept open and free from bias, secondary groups may be formed in rural districts with sufficient strength and balance to make rural life a vital factor in social progress. If, on the other hand, communicative devices are dominated by partisan interests and selfish motives, rural people may become toys in the hands of certain interests which will use them in anti-social ways. The relationships of secondary groups are likely to be exploitative in nature unless the facts of mutual dependence can be brought into the foreground

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why are group influences important in determining a farmer's success in farming or his fitness as a citizen?
2. How may groups be classified?
3. Why is the family an important group?
4. Define a neighborhood.
5. What conditions promote the formation of a neighborhood?
6. What is the rôle of the neighborhood in rural life?
7. What are the essential elements of a community?
8. Compare the importance of the individual and the community in promoting social progress.
9. What is a trade community?
10. Cite two examples of an institutional type of community.
11. What appears to determine the number of special interest-groups or organizations that may exist in a community?
12. List the principal occupational groups in rural communities.
13. Describe the rôle of the various legal groups in rural areas.
14. How is membership in district or state wide groups determined?
15. What circumstances contribute to the growth of secondary groups?

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## CHAPTER V

### RURAL CHILDREN

When President Hoover in his address before the Conference on Child Care and Protection stated that questions of child health and protection were not below the dignity of statesmen or governments he uttered a profound truth. Children are important not only because they give stimulation and balance to adult life but also because through their care, training and education social progress may be achieved. In fact, our greatest hope for social progress consists in the development of a strong, healthy and intelligent group of young people. Every aspect of our modern life affects children, sometimes in a beneficial way and sometimes, unfortunately, in an insidiously destructive manner. Children are helpless to combat injustices and deficiencies in their environment, and, unless the circumstances of their lives are reviewed from time to time, there is danger that great harm may be done to the entire child-life of a nation.

The responsibilities of adults in this connection may be considered as certain rights or obligations which society owes to children, the term *children* being understood to mean all persons under approximately 15 years of age. For the sake of convenience these rights may be grouped into six categories: (1) the right to be well born; (2) the right to health; (3) the right to a normal home life; (4) the right to an education; (5) the right to spiritual and moral training; (6) the right to wholesome recreation. It is the purpose of this chapter to consider to what extent and in what manner these obligations on the part of society are fulfilled so far as the rural child is concerned.

*The Right to Be Well Born*—The right to be well born involves two considerations. first, the hereditary characteristics of the child, and second, the care of the mother during pregnancy and at the time of child birth. Laws in each state stipulate the



conditions which must be fulfilled in order for persons to qualify for marriage. Generally speaking, feeble-minded persons and persons affected with epilepsy or insanity are not granted the privilege of lawful marriage. These laws represent the thought and effort of the community to protect children from a weak heredity. If they could be strictly observed or enforced, the number of children in either the rural or urban communities who are mentally handicapped due to hereditary influences would be greatly diminished. There are, however, some difficulties in the way. It is not an easy matter to determine when a person is feeble-minded to the extent that it would disqualify him or her from marriage, the same statement is true for epilepsy or insanity. But granting that this is possible,—and it is for the more obvious cases—there is still the problem of getting officials who issue marriage licenses actually to refuse to grant a license, when there is reasonable ground for doubt, until a careful investigation is made. These matters are deeply imbedded in custom and tradition, consequently changes in practices of license issuers are made slowly. There can be no doubt but what some couples in both the country and city marry when, from the eugenic standpoint, the marriage is highly inadvisable. Fortunately there are some grounds for the belief that the number of such marriages is decreasing. Laws are becoming stricter, and the dissemination of information regarding ill-advised marriage from the biological standpoint is having some effect. So far as this aspect of being well born is concerned, the rural population shares with the urban in the joint responsibility of seeing that wise marriage laws are put on the statute books and that they are enforced.

In the matter of pre-natal and maternal care there appears to be need for considerable improvement not only because some rural communities lag behind urban ones in this respect but also because the prevailing level of practice needs to be improved. The health section of the White House Conference on Child Care and Protection makes the statement that the main causes of infant mortality are pre-maturity, birth injury, malformation, and infection. It also states that in certain rural sections mid-

wifery is common. Insufficient economic resources may be responsible in a measure for inadequate maternal and infant care, but it is doubtful if this is most frequently the limiting factor. Certainly it is not in many of the more advanced and relatively more prosperous rural areas. In Iowa, for example, a careful survey in certain communities showed that the chief obstacle in the way of adequate care was reluctance to spend money for it.<sup>1</sup> The whole question of infant and maternity care appears to be one concerning which much education is needed. It is a significant fact that the White House Conference recommends more emphasis on obstetrics in medical schools as well as education of nurses, midwives and the laity in regard to this matter.

*The Right to Health*—It is generally conceded that the rural environment is conducive to health and that children are fortunate, so far as health is concerned, if they are reared in the country. There is, of course, some truth to this assumption, for the rural child does have the advantage of outdoor life. He can get plenty of fresh air and sunshine. It is possible, too, that there may be an abundance of healthful foods, such as milk, butter, and, in certain seasons of the year, vegetables and fruits. But these advantages constitute practically all that exist in the country so far as health is concerned. It is well to remember that the presence of these advantages does not prevent the development of certain diseases and defects.

The diet of rural children does not seem to be as inadequate as statements made a few years ago would suggest. It is entirely possible that the great amount of effort put forth by public health agencies, schools and agricultural extension workers in home economics to educate people in regard to proper foods for children is having its effect and that the diet of the entire population has improved. Anyway, in the survey of 256 farm children of school age in Iowa it was found that only 13 drank no milk at all. Ninety-two had less than a pint a day.<sup>2</sup> These children had fresh vegetables in the summer and canned vege-

<sup>1</sup> Baldwin, Fillmore, and Hadley, *Farm Children*, D Appleton-Century Co., 1930, p 182

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 204-205

tables in the winter. Meat was available at least one or more times a day. Only 12 out of the 173 children drank coffee in excessive amounts. A detailed survey of the food habits in Tompkins County, New York, in the summers of 1928 and 1929 furnishes a basis for the following statements: "About one-fourth of the children under 10 years old had less than two cups of milk in their day's diet, although the average consumption was three cups or more. Fewer than half of the adults and young children had as much as two servings of vegetables (other than potatoes and dried beans or peas), although the average for each group was more than one; and only a little more than half of them had two servings of fruit, although the average for each group was nearly two. One-third or more of each group had a raw, leafy vegetable, the average being 0.4 serving, and from one-half to nearly two-thirds had some raw fruit, the average being 1.0 serving."<sup>3</sup>

In Massachusetts, where a study was made of the food consumption of school children in relation to their health in two rural towns, the results showed that, while the diets of 15% of the children in one township and 24 in the other could be considered suitable to their needs, no definite relationship between diet and ill health could be established, except that there was a positive association between drinking milk and good condition of teeth.<sup>4</sup> In South Carolina, also, a study of the diet of school children indicates that 22% of the diets could be rated as good, 36% fair and 41% as poor or very poor.<sup>5</sup> However, almost three-fourths of the children had one pint or more of milk per day. Whole grain cereal was eaten once a day by 82.3% of the children, but fruits were eaten very seldom by most of

<sup>3</sup> Nancy Booker Morey, *A Study of the Food Habits and Health of Farm Families in Tompkins County, New York*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 563, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Esther S. Davis, *The Food Consumption of Rural School Children in Relation to Their Health*, Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 241.

<sup>5</sup> Mary E. Frayser and Ada M. Moser, *The Diet of School Children in Relation to Their Health*, South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 268.

the children, except for the short season when fresh blackberries and peaches were available.<sup>6</sup>

The studies show that, although progress is being made in the matter of diets for rural children which will safeguard their health, acceptable practices are not general enough. There is every justification for continued education in the matter of diet by home economists and health agencies of various kinds, not only to secure a wider adoption of accepted standards but also to secure improvements from time to time. These are almost certain to appear as more research studies in diet problems are made.

The medical care received by rural children does not seem to be adequate. This is shown partly by the high percentage of health defects, such as diseased tonsils and adenoids, which are found among rural children, as well as by the fact that rural people refrain from seeking the services of physicians except in the case of emergencies. Families differ greatly in their views regarding these matters, but, generally speaking, customary practices prevail. Many rural parents believe that there are several so-called children's diseases, such as measles and whooping cough, and that the sooner the children have them the sooner the trouble will be over. Precautionary measures are not taken seriously and in some instances serious complications follow. No doubt there are similar instances of neglect of children's health in cities, too, but they do not appear to be as frequent as in the rural environment. Like many other matters pertaining to health, improvements in the medical care of children depend upon the development of medical services which are within the financial reach of rural people and then upon a willingness of the people to use them. Lack of finances and the fear of having to pay for medical services keeps some families from seeking medical aid for their children even when a defect has been discovered by public health nurses and the recommendation is made that the parents take the child to a physician.

It is fairly certain that the advantages of a public health program are not available to many rural children. Statistics

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

were presented in the chapter on health which showed that county health units exist only in a comparatively small proportion of the United States. The best approximation to a county health unit would be the employment of county public health nurses or school nurses, but these are not found in many rural sections. Even though the work of county public health nurses is much more general than it was a few decades ago, nevertheless hundreds of thousands of rural children do not have the benefits of health inspections which help to detect defects.

*Normal Home Life*—So far as this aspect of child life is concerned, it appears that the rural environment is favorable to the child. Home life is expected to give the child security, stability, and certain benefits of training and education which are possible only in this type of environment. In rural districts family life is stable, not only because divorce and desertion are comparatively uncommon but also because there usually is little mobility on the part of a family. It is not uncommon for families to live for generations in the same neighborhood and even on the same farm. This stability is advantageous to the child inasmuch as it simplifies the problem of adjustment to home and neighborhood life. Neighbors can be evaluated and the adjustments of the family to them can be fairly well established. These conditions give the average rural child a feeling of security which acts as a stabilizing influence on his personality. It is probable, also, that the rural child becomes more closely integrated with the life of his family than would one in an urban environment. There are less attractions away from home for either children or adults in the country, and the work done by the father is usually not far from the premises. Sometimes the entire family may engage in it to a certain extent.

Children are accepted in rural culture. Most families expect to have and do have children. This fact is well demonstrated by census data which show the per cent of families in the rural and urban population that have designated numbers of children under 10 years of age. The figures pertaining to this matter are presented in Table XII.

TABLE XII. PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES HAVING DESIGNATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN TEN YEARS OLD IN THE RURAL FARM, RURAL NON-FARM, AND URBAN POPULATION \*

Number of Children	Rural Farm Families	Rural Non-Farm Families	Urban Families
No children under 10	50.7	57.4	62.4
1 child under 10	19.1	18.8	19.4
2 children under 10	13.7	12.3	10.9
3 children under 10	8.8	6.7	4.6
4 children under 10	5.0	3.3	1.9
5 children under 10	2.0	1.2	0.6
6 or more children under 10	0.7	0.3	0.2

\* Source of Data, *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. VI, Population

These percentages show that a higher proportion of rural families than urban families have children and that they tend to have more children. The rural child soon becomes a part of the family life and makes his or her contribution to its success. One way of doing this is to assist with the work which needs to be done. Children may begin by helping with the chores and, as they become older, assist with field work. Within limits of the child's physical development these activities are highly advantageous. They teach the youngster habits of industry and provide a constructive use of time. But the great danger is that parents will require the child to work in excess of his physical strength or at times which will interfere with his school work. In this connection the White House Conference report of 1930, after admitting the value of farm work to the child under favorable conditions, presents the following observations: (1) very young children are employed; (2) the work is not suited to their strength; (3) the daily and weekly hours are long; and (4) some types of work are unhealthful.<sup>7</sup> The Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor has studied this problem in detail. Results of the study disclose the surprising fact that child labor (labor which is detrimental to the physical, mental, or moral development of the child) occurs where general farming is carried on as well as in such

<sup>7</sup> *White House Conference, 1930*, D. Appleton-Century Co., p. 207.

types of farming where we might expect to find it—truck growing or raising sugar beets, where much hand labor is needed

The problem of hired child labor in agriculture is a difficult one to control, particularly when children work with their parents. Abuses occur and it is almost impossible to correct them. An instance of what occurs in the beet growing areas follows.<sup>8</sup>

"How hard two boys, 10 and 12 years of age, worked is indicated by the fact that they, with their parents and one other adult, worked 65 acres of beets. If each adult cared for 15 acres, which is half as much again as the average, each child would have had to care for 10 acres, the average amount supposed to be cared for by a full-grown worker. These boys worked 8½ hours a day during the hoeing season and 10 hours daily during the fall and spring processes, covering about 11 weeks. The 12-year-old boy also worked between the beet processes at cultivating and planting other crops."

In the cotton growing area of Texas the following instance is reported:

"An eleven-year-old boy, who had begun to do field work at the age of 4 years, lived on a rented farm of 65 acres. He had worked in the fields whenever there was work to do for 8½ months. Beginning in February he had plowed and cut sprouts the equivalent of half a month; in March he had harrowed and planted. In April he began cultivating, which lasted into July; in May he began planting and spent two weeks at it; about May 25 he began to chop cotton, work which occupied him 15 days. In June his principal work was hoeing. During part of August he cut wood. Cotton picking began August 24, and he picked cotton for more than 3 months. His brother, aged 10, had had precisely the same program, but his 9-year-old brother had only hoed, chopped, and picked cotton."

Surveys in North Dakota and in a general farming district in Illinois showed that half of the boys had been absent from school for farm work and that 15% had stayed out of school at least a month on account of farm work. The case of a

<sup>8</sup> *Children in Agriculture*, United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, Bureau Publication 187, p. 12.

13-year-old boy is reported who lost 75 days of school for this reason. His father was a member of the local school board.<sup>9</sup> A more recent study of the work done by farm boys and girls in New York represents, possibly, what may be considered more nearly average conditions. The findings are based on the data for several hundred boys and girls. The boys worked in one year an average of 5.4 months of 260 hours each and the girls worked 3.9 months. For the most part the girls did house work and the boys helped with the chores. Here also the data suggested a relationship between retardation in school and the hours worked per school day<sup>10</sup> Evidence that the practice of child labor on farms is quite general throughout the United States is shown by the census data which report the number of children of specified ages who are gainfully employed in agriculture. Following are the detailed figures.<sup>11</sup>

AGE OF CHILDREN	NUMBER OF CHILDREN GAINFULLY EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE	PER CENT OF TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN EMPLOYED IN ALL OCCUPATIONS
10 to 13 years	205,563	87.4
14 years	113,694	72.1
15 years	150,240	54.8
16 years	230,656	39.2
17 years	275,415	30.9

While it is true, as the census data show, that the proportion of children engaged in agricultural pursuits has declined steadily since 1900, the numbers just given are still large and furnish no foundation for the belief that the gainful employment of children in agriculture will become non-existent.

Such reports indicate that the practice of child labor has become deeply embedded in the pattern of rural family life. In some instances the employment of children to the extent of being detrimental to their well-being is due to custom entirely.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27

<sup>10</sup> Howard W. Beers, *The Income Savings and Work of Boys and Girls on Farms in New York, 1930*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 560

<sup>11</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol IV, Population, page 85.



If the mores of the people regarding this matter could be changed, child labor would be discontinued. In some instances, too, child labor may be due to the neglect or ignorance of parents regarding the detrimental consequences it may have, for the effects of it are sometimes not discernible until later life. Again, some parents require the children to do farm work in excessive amounts because only by that method can they maintain an existence at all. The use of child labor has become institutionalized in the processes of farm family life to such an extent that many families cannot exist without it.

Control of child labor, either when the children are employed away from home or when they work on the home farm, is difficult. Research designed to show the effect of different types and amounts of farm labor would be of much value though remedial measures do not depend entirely on such information. In the more obvious industrial cases, which are unquestioned in their detrimental effects, the conditions of employment of children are subject to legal regulations. Just as child labor is restricted in such industrial establishments, it should be regulated on farms. Then, a stricter enforcement of school attendance laws would assist, for this would help prevent the abuses which sometimes arise and which deprive the child of the advantages of education. Finally, a thorough campaign of education is needed to keep parents informed regarding the possible dangers of child labor and the responsibilities they have in wisely directing the activities of the child in this connection.

There are no data at hand to show the efficacy of the rural family in the development of the personality of the child. It is definitely known that some families succeed remarkably well in this respect and that other families fail in a miserable fashion. The probabilities are that the rôle of the family in this respect depends upon the quality of the family life itself, rather than upon the place of residence. One advantage of the rural environment, however, is the fact that members of the family can be associated together not only in work activities but in recreation as well, for many recreational events of rural people are attended by families as a unit.

*Education*—The education of the rural child may be considered as coming from two sources, educational influences within the school and educational influences in the child's home and neighborhood environment. So far as schooling is concerned, universal education is an accepted policy in this country and legal provision is made for the education of children regardless of their place of residence. In so far as this policy is carried out the rural child experiences no disadvantage. Unfortunately, due to a number of reasons, the policy is not realized in all rural districts. One difficulty is the sparsely settled area in which it is often necessary for children to travel long distances to reach a school. A second limitation is the fact that the school may not be sufficiently well equipped, either in physical facilities or in teaching personnel, to make the educational processes effective. Another difficulty, too, is lack of finances to provide such advantages. As a result of all these circumstances and numerous others, such as the practice of doing farm work while school is in session, rural children often do not receive educational advantages in the public schools comparable to those provided for urban children. This fact is indicated to some extent by the school attendance of urban and rural children which is reported in the census. The percentage of pupils of various ages attending school in 1930 are reported as follows:

AGE	PER CENT ATTENDING SCHOOL			
	Urban	Rural	Rural Farm	Rural Non-Farm
5 years	29.6	10.8	9.5	12.7
6 years	76.6	56.4	53.0	61.1
7-13 years	97.3	93.3	92.1	95.0
14 and 15 years	92.7	85.0	83.3	87.9
16 and 17 years	60.5	53.9	52.0	57.2
18 to 20 years	22.5	20.0	19.1	21.3

The figures for the rural group are lower in every instance than those for the urban children. Furthermore, the percentage of attendance for the rural non-farm group is higher than for the children living on farms. The ratio of illiteracy also is no

more encouraging from the standpoint of the rural child, for in 1930 the percentage of illiteracy among persons 10 to 20 years old in the urban environment was 0.5 while for the rural population the corresponding figure was 2.8. For the rural farm population the percentage of illiteracy was 3.4 and for the rural non-farm 1.9<sup>12</sup>

So far as school advantages are concerned, then, it seems that rural children do not share equally with the urban in this particular advantage. However, the percentages just given apply to the entire rural and urban population. It is a well-known fact that many rural communities have excellent schools, but it is equally well-known that many rural communities have extremely poor schools. It has been observed, also, that the poor schools are not always in poor farming areas, because the provision of good school facilities is not entirely a matter of financial ability to pay for them. There must be a desire for such advantages and a willingness on the part of the people to co-operate in maintaining them. In this connection mention should be made of the rural library service. Most rural schools have some library books, but often the books are old and the collection inadequate. Yet, rural children do like to read if interesting material is available. Library service outside the school is not found in all communities; even where it does exist there is the danger that the interests of children will be neglected. It is easy for inexperienced persons in charge of a library to overlook the reading needs of children and to yield to the temptation of loaning them volumes that are intended for adults.

Outside the school room the rural environment offers remarkable facilities for educational development. Every rural child has numerous contacts with nature. He cannot help but observe the processes of plant and animal life, and a knowledge of such matters furnishes the foundation for the acquisition of more knowledge in adult life. The rural child also learns habits of industry and the necessity of assuming responsibility, on a farm especially, where innumerable situations arise which demand such action on the part of a child.

<sup>12</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. III, Part I, Population, pages 17 and 18

One adjunct to the rural school which has had a remarkable growth in recent years is the 4-H Club work. The objectives of these clubs are suggested by the 4-H's, which signify health, hand, head, and heart. In other words, these clubs try to train the members to be healthy, to learn to do worthy tasks, to think clearly, and to develop spiritually. Dr C. B. Smith of the office of Co-operative Extension Work states the purpose of club work as follows <sup>13</sup> (1) helping country boys and girls to improve rural farm and home practices and the social life of their communities; (2) showing them the possibilities of rural life; (3) aiding those who desire to become efficient farmers and homemakers; and (4) teaching rural boys and girls how to make of themselves public-spirited useful citizens and leaders in rural affairs.

In order to become a successful member the child must choose a project, keep appropriate records, and write an essay about the project at the conclusion of the work. This movement has had a remarkable growth in recent years. The following figures present in a statistical manner the extent of this work in the United States in 1932.<sup>14</sup>

ITEM	NUMBER
Junior (4-H) Clubs	59,081
Different Boys Enrolled	381,573
Different Girls Enrolled	544,039
Total Enrollment	925,613
Different Boys Completing	271,339
Different Girls Completing	399,383
Total Completing	670,722
Projects Started	1,765,480
Projects Completed	1,205,108

This work is carried on in practically every state in the Union and is being gradually extended to communities within the states in which the program has not yet developed. These clubs

<sup>13</sup> A C True, *History of Agricultural Extension Work in the United States*, Supt of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D C, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup> *Co-operative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics*, United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service Circular, 187.

are fostered by the Agricultural Extension Agencies in the various counties, but they also receive much valuable assistance from local leaders. In fact, it is not customary to start a program in a community until leadership, either paid or voluntary, can be provided. It is reported that in 1932 a total of 105,254 volunteer local leaders served in this work. Some were teachers, some were older club members, and many were farm men and women.<sup>15</sup> Such an interest on the part of rural people for the children in their community is a good indication of their innate interest in childhood as well as of their appreciation of the 4-H club program. Generally speaking, the age of children who may become members extends from 10 to 20 years, actual studies show that the peak years for membership are 13 or 14 and that after 17 there is a rapid decline in membership. A study of the age distribution of 823 club members in 19 areas of the country gave the following results.<sup>16</sup>

AGE	PERCENTAGE OF BOYS	PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS
Under 10 years	5.0	3.0
10 years	5.6	8.3
11 years	8.4	10.3
12 years	14.8	15.3
13 years	14.2	13.2
14 years	13.9	15.1
15 years	10.7	11.6
16 years	10.1	10.2
17 years	7.2	6.2
18 years	4.2	4.0
19 years	3.0	1.2
20 years	1.7	1.2
Over 20 years	1.2	0.4

These figures show that, while it may be possible for the club program to interest the older members of the young people's groups, at the present time it does not do so. There are many reasons for this. Possibly the interests of the young people

<sup>15</sup> *Co-operative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics*, United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service Circular, 192

<sup>16</sup> *Co-operative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics*, United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service Circular, 183

change to such an extent that they are not stimulated by the club program. They seek other types of experience which are more varied. But the great appeal of club work to younger children is self-evident.

One phase of club work which has developed in recent years has been the recreational program. This interest has been developed in club meetings through songs, plays and other similar activities. The clubs go on tours occasionally, and club camps have become a regular feature of the work in many counties. In fact, in 1932 a total of 2,653 camps were held.

Club work has an economic significance. It furnishes an opportunity for the rural boy or girl to earn some money, because, as a general rule, the completed projects will show a profit. In New York State, for example, the profits from projects most frequently reported varied from \$11 to \$25.<sup>17</sup> Through club work the rural child is stimulated to use the opportunities available to produce something of cash value. Many boys and girls have secured funds for a high school and college education in this way. This experience also gives the member a chance to study the vocation of farming in a first-hand manner under favorable circumstances. He may decide much more accurately, then, whether or not he wishes to follow farming as a vocation.

Other values in club work are generally assumed and the limited number of studies to determine these values in an objective manner indicate that the assumptions are correct. In West Virginia nearly 75% of the clubs studied showed evidence that the club members remained in school longer than non-club members. Good reading habits were found also in 83.3% of the clubs. Other influences besides club membership were likely influential, but certainly the influence of the club work was positive.<sup>18</sup> In a careful study of the effects of club work on school work, Florence H. Stubbs of Virginia reaches these conclusions: (1) that positive and significant values are contributed

<sup>17</sup> Howard Beers, *The Income Savings and Work of Boys and Girls on Farms in New York, 1930*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 560.

<sup>18</sup> T. L. Harris, *Four-H Club Work in West Virginia*, West Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 241.

to the education of the children by 4-H club work, and (2) that if an informal co-operation between the schools and clubs had produced significant results, a definite and purposeful program of integration of school and club work would result in greater educational values<sup>19</sup> Further studies are needed, however, not only to consider school work but also the factors that determine club membership.

*The Right to Spiritual and Moral Training*—The influences contributing to the spiritual development of the child are very numerous and are interwoven with other aspects of personality development to a very high degree It is customary to entrust the home with major responsibility for the guidance in spiritual matters, and the limited data which are available indicate that these influences are very great The matter of church membership may be taken as an example A recent study of the rural churches in Allegany County, New York, shows that only 13.4% of the families reported church membership of parents without children, in only 2.6% of the cases were children, but not parents, members; and 69.3% of the families reported membership of both parents and children.<sup>20</sup> Similar relationships of parents' and children's interests are found in other activities as well, and the inevitable conclusion is that the home life is extremely important Rural families have not been evaluated in an objective manner from this standpoint. It is certain, however, that the home influence is very great and that this influence varies, depending upon the personalities of the parents and the degree of understanding and harmonious relationships they are able to maintain with the child.

The community agency which is expected to lead in the spiritual and moral development of the child is the church. There has been much discussion about the efficacy of churches in rural communities from this standpoint. Sometimes it appears as though the churches were becoming entirely ineffective. In

<sup>19</sup> Florence Homer Stubbs, *Effects of Club Work on School Children*, Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 274

<sup>20</sup> William L. Mather, Jr., *The Rural Churches of Allegany County*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 587.

other instances exactly the opposite appears to be the case. It is certain, however, that a majority of churches do provide a place for children. The United States Census of Religious Bodies reports for 1926 that 15.4% of the rural church membership was under 13 years of age. This, however, is not an accurate index of the importance of the church on child life, as many children who attend church or come under its influence in some way may not be counted as members. Attendance at Sunday School would be an example of such an influence. Persons who are familiar with rural communities will remember that the Christmas tree exercises, children's day programs and other similar events held at the church elicit the interest and participation of many children. Nevertheless, there are thousands of rural children in the United States and some children in almost every community who are entirely unaffected by the church program. This condition constitutes a deficit in the rural communities and a challenge to rural churches to correct it.

Other so-called character building agencies for children do not exist as frequently in rural communities as in urban areas. This difference is offset to a considerable extent, perhaps, by the influence of the 4-H clubs on character building. Moreover, the program of the Scouts organization for boys and girls is being extended gradually to rural communities. The boys' work of the Y.M.C.A. and the activities of Girl Reserves sponsored by the Y.W.C.A. are important, too, in influencing boys and girls in some rural communities.

There are also some other agencies which are putting forth constructive efforts to help in the character education. Such a movement is the Knighthood of Youth, sponsored by the National Child Welfare League. It is the purpose of this movement to apply the principles of character education in the training of school children in the elementary grades. In order to do this no formal program is established. Rather, an attempt is made to organize the school group so that it will think about worthy deeds and ideas and thus be enabled to give credit to the member who engages in constructive activities.<sup>21</sup> The progress and suc-

<sup>21</sup> National Child Welfare Association, Inc., Knighthood of Youth.



cess of this movement in Nebraska, as well as in some other states, indicates that the program is adaptable to rural districts and that where the program is in operation it tends to stimulate all agencies in the community that are interested in the spiritual and moral welfare of rural children.

*The Right to Recreation*—This aspect of child life was considered at some length in the chapter dealing with recreation. It was evident there that rural children have opportunities for outdoor recreation and can come in contact with nature in various ways. But beyond this point the facilities for their recreation need to be developed just as they do for children in cities. It is particularly important that rural parents recognize the moral and social values in play. Unfortunately, they often overlook these values entirely and think of play only in terms of exercise or spontaneous physical activity. There is great need, too, for more playground facilities in rural communities, especially in connection with rural schools, because it is at school that the child may participate most frequently in group activities of various kinds.

*Dependent and Neglected Children*—It is customary to define the dependent child as one who is dependent on persons other than his parents or immediate relatives for support. The neglected child is one who is being neglected by his parents or guardians to the extent that the neglect is considered harmful to him. The neglected child is often the dependent child, though he may not necessarily be so. It frequently happens, too, that the neglected or dependent child becomes a delinquent child in the sense that he presents a behavior problem. While no data are at hand to show the extent of child dependency, neglect, or delinquency in the rural sections, as compared with the urban, the probabilities are that there is not a great difference between the two population groups in this respect, if equal numbers of the population are considered. The density of the population in the rural areas is less than it is in the cities, hence the cases demanding attention are more scattered. They, therefore, appear to be less frequent. Owing to the wide territorial distribution of these cases, voluntary organizations for the care and protec-

tion of children have not developed in the rural areas to the same extent that they have in urban centers. The result is that rural children who need the services of these organizations do not have them. The community depends upon public agencies to care for such problems. The difficulty with this method is the fact that frequently the persons who administer the laws are not well trained for their duties. As a consequence, the neglected or dependent child in the rural sections is probably treated less wisely than he would likely be treated in an urban community. It is probable also that rural people are reluctant about reporting cases of neglect until it is extreme. Rural children need the services of trained social workers just as do urban children, but, generally speaking, they do not receive them at the present time.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. List the obligations which society owes to the child.
2. Describe the measures that are being taken to give the rural child a sound heredity.
3. What advantages does the country environment offer the rural child from the standpoint of health? What disadvantages?
4. What are the important reasons for the lack of adequate medical care for rural children?
5. In what respects is home life in rural areas favorable to children?
6. In what ways may home life be inimical to children?
7. Why is the control of child labor in agriculture an especially difficult problem?
8. What circumstances are likely to limit the school facilities for rural children?
9. Enumerate the values of 4-H Club work.
10. Describe the influences which contribute to the spiritual development of rural children.
11. Why are dependent and neglected children in the rural population likely to be less well cared for than similar children in the urban population?

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## CHAPTER VI

### RURAL YOUTH

The term "youth" has various connotations. Any extended discussion of the subject, therefore, warrants a definition of the term. As used in this chapter, "rural youth" will be understood to mean persons in the rural population who are 15 to 25 years of age. The lower figure marks approximately the period when individuals cease to be a part of children's groups and lose the desire to participate in the activities which children enjoy. The upper figure indicates the approximate age at which most persons will assume the status of an adult.

Only within recent years has the youth group received careful consideration by rural sociologists and other persons interested in rural life. Formerly the transition of persons from childhood to adulthood was assumed to be inevitable, like physical growth. Yet only a little thought and reflection will show that there are numerous problems and difficulties which youth must face. The way in which these are met has a vital influence in the personality adjustments of young people, not only during the period of adolescence, but throughout life. The views of youth, too, on matters of social organization and social progress will be a dominant force in shaping the destiny of a community or nation.

*The Problems of Youth*—Some problems of youth are as old almost as civilization itself and are universal in nature. They involve such matters as the selection of a location, the selection of a mate, the choice of a vocation, the development of a philosophy of morals and religion, and problems of recreation. It might seem as though ways of meeting these problems successfully would have been found, since they have existed for such a long time. But circumstances change often and, at times, very rapidly. It is now a common-place statement to say that in the United States a new social order is developing. Only careful thought can reveal the extent to which this accentuates the prob-

lems of youth Within the short space of a decade the prosperity of the country has swerved from the high pinnacle of 1929 to the depths of an unprecedented depression in 1930 and the following years. Vocationally, youth is especially perplexed, because acute unemployment has left many young people idle It has caused an increase of youth in rural communities, for the normal migration of this group to cities has practically ceased and many who went to urban centers during the years of prosperity have returned Not only have these changes caused frustration in a vocational way, but they also have necessitated an adjustment to a lower level of living in the sense that there is less money to spend for living. These circumstances, in turn, have accentuated the difficulties in family relationships.

Questions of religion and morality are especially perplexing to youth at the present time Certainly young people have witnessed the failure of money as the primary goal or measure of life Lacking this criterion they do not know where to turn for guidance. This condition creates a questioning attitude about existing religious customs and practices, as well as about certain moral standards The need in this connection is for accurate information about current social conditions and events. Such information will enable youth to make more dependable decisions in regard to personal conduct and matters of social policy.

*Numbers of Rural Youth*—There are two approaches to a consideration of numbers of young people in the rural environment: (1) the total number in the country, and (2) the number in any particular community The essential data pertaining to the first approach are contained in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII NUMBER AND PER CENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE RURAL FARM, RURAL NON-FARM AND URBAN POPULATION \*

Age Period	Rural Farm		Rural Non-Farm		Urban	
	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
15 to 19	3,420,696	11.3	2,314,237	8.9	6,015,411	8.7
19 to 24	2,434,241	8.1	2,115,735	8.5	6,420,308	9.3

\* Source of data *Fifteenth Census*, Vol II, Population

It is evident that a large percentage of the population in both the rural and the urban divisions belongs in the age groups varying from 15 to 24. This is true throughout the nation. Every state has its youth, and every state therefore has its youth problem. Some idea of its importance may be gained from the number and percentage of young people in each state in the total population. This is given in Table XIV.

The number of young people in the various communities will vary not only with the size of the community but also with the opportunities which it provides for remunerative employment for persons in this age period. From the standpoint of rural organization especially, the number of young people in rural areas is important, because, owing to a comparatively sparse population, there may not be a sufficient number within the community to promote effective organizations. In normal times this condition is accentuated because of the usual migration of young people from the community in search of employment. At the present time, however, migration from this cause has decreased to a marked degree, and the responsibility of the rural community in assisting youth is accordingly enhanced.

*The Responsibility of the Community*—It appears that until the present time the community has failed to put forth a concerted effort in the interest of youth. Older people have accepted the variant behavior of children as problems to be tolerated or solved as the circumstances seemed to warrant. Then, when individuals outgrew the stage of childhood, they were expected to behave as adults. The fact that young people did not so behave seems not to have discouraged adults in their efforts to bring about such results. For example, a study of the community relationships of young people in Missouri shows that a conflict between the old and the new was evident. The older people were most favorable to the church and least friendly toward the play and recreation of the young people, while the attitudes of the young people were just the reverse of those held by their elders.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, a study of organizations affecting

<sup>1</sup> E. L. Morgan and Henry J. Burt, *Community Relations of Young People*, Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 110

TABLE XIV POPULATION 15 TO 24 YEARS OF AGE IN EACH STATE \*

State	Rural Farm	Rural Non-Farm	Total	Per Cent of Total Population in State
Alabama	281,718	117,595	399,313	15.1
Arizona	18,675	33,997	52,672	12.1
Arkansas	233,691	68,448	302,139	16.3
California	95,746	147,075	242,821	4.3
Colorado	53,006	40,972	93,978	9.1
Connecticut	13,933	64,240	78,173	4.9
Delaware	8,358	11,172	19,530	8.2
Florida	54,933	82,694	137,627	9.4
Georgia	305,947	126,966	432,913	14.9
Idaho	34,930	22,614	57,544	12.9
Illinois	174,343	159,186	333,529	4.4
Indiana	135,447	100,671	236,118	7.3
Iowa	177,867	80,655	258,522	10.5
Kansas	130,438	75,572	206,010	11.0
Kentucky	221,032	116,072	337,104	12.9
Louisiana	173,335	87,301	260,636	12.4
Maine	26,104	50,162	76,266	9.6
Maryland	43,579	72,844	116,423	7.1
Massachusetts	13,888	51,186	65,074	1.5
Michigan	131,585	120,369	251,954	5.2
Minnesota	167,925	66,088	234,013	9.1
Mississippi	288,673	63,164	351,837	17.5
Missouri	196,834	110,459	307,293	8.5
Montana	35,686	26,505	62,191	11.6
Nebraska	113,861	51,833	165,694	12.0
Nevada	2,731	6,020	8,751	9.6
New Hampshire	8,341	20,465	28,806	6.2
New Jersey	21,502	92,316	113,818	2.8
New Mexico	31,013	20,800	60,813	14.4
New York	112,474	202,800	315,274	25.7
North Carolina	335,097	156,841	491,938	15.5
North Dakota	83,776	30,844	114,620	16.8
Ohio	171,236	179,942	351,178	5.3
Oklahoma	212,604	106,468	319,072	13.3
Oregon	37,353	39,452	76,805	8.1
Pennsylvania	152,091	389,726	541,817	5.6
Rhode Island	1,796	6,544	8,340	1.2
South Carolina	198,069	100,384	298,453	17.2
South Dakota	74,776	29,956	104,732	15.1
Tennessee	244,335	100,253	344,588	13.2
Texas	496,670	211,761	708,431	12.2
Utah	21,899	24,940	46,839	9.2
Vermont	18,621	20,363	38,984	10.8
Virginia	186,550	131,226	317,776	13.1
Washington	52,478	62,874	115,352	7.4
West Virginia	87,736	147,005	234,741	13.6
Wisconsin	159,163	78,441	237,604	8.1
Wyoming	10,963	15,303	26,266	11.6
United States	5,852,808	4,131,564	9,984,372	8.1

\* Source of data *Fifteenth Census, Vol II, Population.*

farm youth in Locust Township, Columbia County, Pennsylvania, presents evidence that there was an inadequate emphasis on organizations that would appeal especially to youth. The school furnished the principal opportunity for contacts among the young people, but the opportunity for participation was accorded to only a comparatively small percentage of the group.<sup>2</sup> It is also known that the 4-H club program which makes such a great appeal to farm boys and girls until they are 15 or 16 years of age fails to interest an equally large number from 16 to 20 years old. While it is true also that churches in rural communities purport to interest young people in their communities, actually they reach only a part of the group. For some reason the problems of youth, as such, have not caught the attention of community leaders, partly, perhaps, because the personnel of the youth group changes gradually as the young people become adults in their interests and activities.

The time has arrived when it is necessary for rural communities to think seriously and in a more systematic manner regarding the problems of youth. If this is done, in all probability many ways of helping young people can be found. Every community has some resources which are helpful, if the people are ingenious enough to use them. It is a mistake for a community to assume that nothing can be done to assist youth, or to say that young people are not interested. Young people want the association and guidance of adults who can inspire and help them, but they do not want adults to make the blunder of depriving them of initiative. Unless young people can share in the plans for their own welfare, there is danger that the plans will be of little interest or value to them. Furthermore, numerous problems of youth are characteristic only of the community in which they originate; therefore they must be solved by community action.

*Organizations Interested in Youth*—While it is true that community leaders have tended to neglect the interests of youth, nevertheless a number of organizations have taken an interest

<sup>2</sup> W V Dennis, *Organizations Affecting Farm Youth in Locust Township, Columbia County, Pennsylvania*, Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 265



in the circumstances confronting youth. One important influence in this connection is the recent interest which the agricultural extension service has taken in the problem. Extension workers are not unmindful of the fact that the percentage of enrollment in 4-H clubs decreases rapidly after the period of 15 or 16 years of age. In consideration of this matter before the Land Grant College Association, Mr. W. G. Lloyd gave the results of an inquiry regarding the cause of this lack of interest.<sup>3</sup> Although the replies to the inquiry were based on opinion and observation, they were very suggestive. Some informants thought that too much emphasis was put on obtaining a large enrollment in club work and not enough consideration was given to the quality of the work. This resulted in a heavy turnover in club membership, as some were enrolled who were not fitted to carry on the work. Others thought that the mixture of older and younger members in the same club was unwise, as the interests of children 10 to 15 differ widely from those of young people over 15 years of age. Still others suggested that a project or demonstration which interested the younger group was too elementary for the older group. As one solution for these problems it is suggested that club membership be divided into three groups, namely: (a) Junior clubs for the age group 10 to 15; (b) Senior clubs for the age group 15 to 20; and (c) Graduate clubs for persons over 20 years of age.<sup>4</sup> Such a division seems to have considerable merit. However, the number of persons of the older age groups who reside within the community might be a limiting factor, as well as the fact that the diversity of interest on the part of the members would be greater with an increase of age. Nevertheless, in the case of older girls the extension agencies are achieving some success in meeting their needs. Progress is being made in developing local leadership and in increasing responsibility in caring for the home. For example, in Kentucky older members took over the enrollment for all 4-H clubs in their county, which resulted in a large

<sup>3</sup> William G. Lloyd, *Extension Work with Young Men and Young Women*, United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service, Circular 172

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

increase in membership; in Virginia the older girls sponsored the Junior 4-H club work.<sup>5</sup>

There is reasonable ground for belief that the 4-H club program, or something similar to it, can be developed so that it will appeal to rural youth. The previous experience in 4-H club work on the part of so many youngsters should provide a certain degree of interest and experience on which such a program could be built. At the present time there is apparently too wide a gap in the extension program between the time of 4-H club membership and the period when adult programs will be of interest and value. But a program designed for the older boys and girls will have to be expanded to include a consideration of problems in personality adjustment and practical experience in social organization. It is encouraging, therefore, to note in the last report of Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics in the United States that 236 county agricultural agents reported a combined membership of approximately 10,000 in groups organized for young people above club age.<sup>6</sup>

Another organization intended to promote and develop the interest of rural youth is the Future Farmers of America. This is a national organization of vocational agricultural students. In the various states there are state organizations. In the local community the organization is called a chapter. These chapters have local meetings, and sponsor a wide variety of activities. The following program is suggestive of what this organization tries to do.<sup>7</sup>

1. Increasing the effectiveness of the future farmers of America by increasing the number of chapters and the number of members in the chapters.
2. Promoting a more efficient agriculture and a better rural life by developing the long time project with ownership and management by the student and a net project income of at least \$100.

<sup>5</sup> Gertrude L. Warren, *Meeting the Needs of Older Rural Girls*, United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service Circular, 180.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics in the United States, 1932*, Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

<sup>7</sup> *Future Farmers of America*, (Michigan) News Letter, Vol. 3, No. 6.

3. Promoting thrift among the students of vocational agriculture.
4. Promoting project tours.
5. Promoting an F. F. A. banquet each year.
- 6 Exhibiting and judging in school, community and county fairs.
- 7 Sending grain and stock judging teams to the state judging contest at the State College Junior Farmers' Week and helping to finance the winning dairy team to the National Dairy Show and the winning stock judging team to the American Royal Live Stock Show.
- 8 Sending contestants to the State, Regional and National, F. F. A. speaking contests.
9. Sending grain and potato exhibits to the vocational exhibition at the State College Farmers' Week
10. Encouraging the older and more mature members to become 4-H club leaders in their own rural communities.
11. Encouraging more inter-chapter activities.

It appears from printed information and actual contact with the Future Farmers Organization that it is an addition to the agencies designed to help rural youth, rather than a duplication of the program of any other group. Such an organization adds to worthy individual effort the stimulus and benefit of group approval and group discussion. It helps young men to see the advantages in farming and to profit by the use of scientific methods. As yet, a similar organization is not reported for the young women, though there would seem to be a place for it.

In addition to the groups sponsored by the Agricultural Extension Agencies there are a number of voluntary organizations which are interested in the welfare of youth. The Southern Women's Educational Alliance is such an organization. It endeavors to help young people by encouraging them in constructive activities and by helping them to get in contact with sources of information that are already existing. Another is an incorporated organization known as Junior Achievement. A part of its program is to sponsor programs for young people 17 to 25 years of age. These include instruction in selected construction hob-

bies, study of local business and professional opportunities, opportunities to take part in music, art and similar activities. Mention should be made also of the older boys' work in the Y.M.C.A. All these organizations are based on the assumption that young people in rural communities need help in meeting the problems which they inevitably must face.

*Youth and Vocational Selection*—One of the most perplexing problems facing rural youth is the choice of a vocation. Vocational guidance at best is a perplexing problem, for there are many variable factors to consider. One is the demand which is made by organized society for workers in the various vocations. Another is the interests of the individual in particular vocations. A third is his physical and mental capacity. In order for an individual to be adjusted successfully in a vocational way a reasonably harmonious adjustment must be established among these three variables and the factors which influence them.

Now the predominant occupation in rural areas is farming, and every farm boy has an opportunity to observe or practice this vocation in a first-hand sort of way. This would seem to be sufficient but, unfortunately, it is not. The young person may get a biased view of farming and thus fail to comprehend clearly its advantages or disadvantages. He is apt to judge farming by what the average farmer does or by what his father does, rather than by what he, as a farmer, might do. It should be pointed out, however, that 4-H club work and the courses in vocational agriculture given in connection with the public schools have done much to enable rural youth to experience and to judge farming on a fair basis. These movements have been the means of changing mediocre farmers to good ones and of inducing many boys who are unquestionably qualified by temperament and training to become farmers instead of entering other occupations.

The need at the present time is for some means of continuing a youth's interest and income from club or vocational work in order to eliminate the gap in his contact with farming as a boy and as an adult farm operator with entire responsibility for management of a farm. The best solution for this problem

which has appeared thus far is some father-son partnership plan, whereby the son may share in the responsibility and income from certain farm enterprises. These partnership agreements require a reasonable degree of co-operation of father and son, but, assuming this, the plan is a successful one.

These remarks have applied primarily to the young man, but the vocational interest of the older girl on the farm needs to be considered. Every person desires a certain amount of self-expression and independence. If rural girls could be given some form of remunerative employment, they would be happier and a smaller percentage, doubtless, would seek work in towns or cities. There is no fundamental reason why partnership agreements regarding certain farm projects, like poultry raising, vegetable gardening, or floriculture might not be made with the farm girl as well as with the farm boy. Such activities would give the girl experience in work she might follow in later life if she marries a farmer or if she chooses some phase of agriculture as a career.

Even if the above measures are taken, there will be a number of young men and women in rural families who will not want to farm or who cannot do so because of financial limitations. It is more difficult to familiarize these young people with the vocations in which they may be interested than it is with farming. This is due partly to the fact that their vocational interests will vary greatly and consequently they will want experience in various kinds of work. Detailed tabulation of the occupations of sons and daughters in 616 rural families in Connecticut illustrates this statement very well.<sup>8</sup> The entire list is given, as it is probably representative of the occupations rural young people in other states follow if they do not become farmers.

There is a possibility, nevertheless, of assisting youth in rural communities who will engage in occupations other than farming. One important measure is to encourage instruction regarding

<sup>8</sup> J. L. Hypes, Victor A. Rapport and Eileen Kennedy, *Connecticut Youth and Farming Occupations*, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 182.

## THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE SONS.

OCCUPATIONS	NUMBER	OCCUPATIONS	NUMBER
Farmer	132	Policeman	1
Student	39	Railroad Employee	1
Factory Worker	25	Cabinet Maker	1
Carpenter	17	Steam Shovel Operator	1
Laborer (common)	15	Sexton (cemetery)	1
Mechanic	15	Teamster	1
Clerk	15	County Agent	1
Truckman	11	Laundry Man	1
Salesman	10	Gas Company Worker	1
Engineer	8	State Park Employee	1
Electrician	7	City Work (unskilled)	1
Machinist	6	Credit Manager	1
Telephone Company Worker	4	Dentist	1
Ice Man	4	Meat and Ice Business	1
Bus Driver	4	Herdsman	1
Store Owner	4	Golf Course Attendant	1
Inspector	4	Mason (brick and stone)	1
Sailor	4	Entomologist	1
Plumber	4	Superintendent Fish and Game Club	1
Foreman	4	Timekeeper	1
Invalid	3	Carpenter and Farmer	1
Gas Station Attendant	3	Printer	1
Lumber Company Worker	3	Lawyer	1
Bookkeeper	3	Odd Jobs	1
Lumber Company Owner	3	Doctor	1
Accountant	2	Pharmacist	1
Milk Dealer	2	Insurance	1
Mail Carrier	2	Hotel Manager	1
Architect	2	Postmaster	1
Butcher	2	College Professor	1
Trolley Conductor	2	Sales Promoter	1
Store Worker	1	Forest Ranger	1
Restaurant Manager	1	Chemist	1
Garage Owner	1	Yard Man (railroad)	1
Grain Worker	1	Post Office Clerk	1
Fireman	1	Unknown	18
		Total Number of Sons	417
		Total Number of Occu- pations	71

## THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE DAUGHTERS.

OCCUPATIONS	NUMBER	OCCUPATIONS	NUMBER
Housewife	151	Dentist's Assistant	2
Housework (parents' home)	53	Dietitian	2
Secretary	44	Timekeeper	1
Student	35	Osteopath	1
Housework (away)	31	Reform School (inmate)	1
Factory Worker	16	Home Demonstration Agent	1
Nurse	14	Artist	1
Farming (home)	9	Dressmaker	1
Teacher	7	Bookbinder	1
Bookkeeper	5	Waitress	1
Invalid	5	Proof-reader	1
Store Clerk	4	Commercial Designer	1
Telephone Operator	3	Unknown	3
		Total Number of Daughters	394
		Total Number of Occupations	26

vocational guidance in the public schools, for certainly youth should not be "pushed" into farming or any other occupation. At least one rural high school, by working closely in co-operation with the business and professional men in the community, has let the young people observe and practice in a limited way the occupations they think they want to follow. It is also possible for the young people to consult representatives of the various vocations and secure from them ideas and opinions about their work. Then, the suggestion has been made that practical courses in the social sciences be developed for the young people 15 to 25 years of age who are out of school as well as for those still in school. These courses would tend to familiarize farm youth with their total social environment in order that they understand more clearly the nature of the various occupations in which they might engage.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> C Horace Hamilton, *Rural-Urban Migration in North Carolina, 1920-1930*, North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 295.

If community leaders seriously turned their attention to the matter it is certainly possible that more non-agricultural employment can be created in rural communities. This effort would probably develop in two directions: (1) the development of such arts and crafts within the home as would be remunerative for the young person, and (2) the development of rural factory industries. These are becoming a greater possibility with the extension of electric power to rural areas, along with improved means of transportation and the development of modern housing facilities. In fact, already 29.1% of the rural non-farm population is employed in manufacturing or mechanical industries and 4.2% of rural farm population were so employed in 1930.<sup>10</sup>

A number of other occupations which are ordinarily thought of in terms of urban employment and residence may be developed in the rural environment. These include particularly the professional pursuits—the ministry, teaching, and medical practice. All these occupations are necessary, worthy and, everything considered, may be as remunerative in rural districts as in cities, or at least may be sufficiently remunerative for all practical purposes. Persons now following these professions in rural communities often have as their goal the migration to cities when they have accumulated sufficient experience. This need not be so, for the rural youth who appreciates and understands country life and country people can find ample opportunity to use his talents in the country.

*Youth and Education*—From the standpoint of education rural youth is divided into two groups, those who are attending high school or college, and those who are not attending school either because they are unable to do so or because they do not care for the high school or college courses. Included in this latter group, too, would be those who have graduated from high school and are not attending college. The educational needs of the group in school are, to a certain extent, provided for, since they can have the benefit of teachers and organized classes. The problem

<sup>10</sup> T. B. Manny and Wayne C. Nason, *Rural Factory Industries*, United States Department of Agriculture, Circular 312, page 2'



here is to enrich and adapt the school curriculum so that when the young person graduates, he will not be "lost", so to speak, in the very community where he lived while attending school. It is a tragic circumstance when a high school graduate who is unemployed and who cannot go to college can find nothing especially constructive to do. The adjustment of the school program to prevent such a condition is primarily a problem in rural education and one which everyone concerned with school instruction and administration must face.

The group not enrolled in school presents a different problem. If those comprising this group are not actually interested in education, their interest needs to be aroused; if the interest is already developed, the means of satisfying it need to be supplied. These are problems to which comparatively little attention has been given until within recent years, notwithstanding the fact that census data pertaining to school attendance have shown repeatedly that only a small percentage of the rural young people over 18 years of age attend school. In 1930 only 20% of the rural youth 18 to 20 were in school; of the group 16 and 17 years of age only 53.9% were so reported.

One means of extending the advantage of training to the youth not in school is through correspondence courses. Under the title "High School Instruction by Mail", <sup>11</sup> a bulletin of the Office of Education, United States Department of the Interior, indicates that correspondence courses can be used to provide educational advantages in sparsely settled communities. There is a rapid development of this work and many State Universities and Teachers' Colleges are now offering instruction in this manner.<sup>12</sup> Some young persons use these courses to secure their school credits and thus prepare for entrance to colleges; others take the courses for their educational value without any reference to college entrance. Such work will doubtless be valued in different ways, depending upon the viewpoint and the experience of the person passing judgment on it. But the fact remains

<sup>11</sup> Walter H. Gaumnitz, *High School Instruction by Mail*, Office of Education, Department of the Interior, Bulletin 1933, No. 13

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

that correspondence courses provide opportunities and stimulation to thousands of rural youth who otherwise could not secure the advantages of systematic instruction at all. Persons interested in rural social progress will look favorably upon the extension of this work by state colleges and universities on a scientific, non-profit basis.

The other means of instruction for the group out of school is through the organization of classes either as post-graduate courses in the high school or simply as classes in adult education, or, perhaps more correctly speaking, self-education. The significance and possibilities of this movement have received renewed emphasis in recent years when there has been so much unemployment and frustration of plans for education. One evidence of the need of such courses is shown by the response to the emergency educational program sponsored by the Federal Government in co-operation with the states and local communities during the winter of 1933-34. Complete statistics pertaining to this activity have not appeared as this is being written, but thousands of classes were organized in rural and semi-rural areas. The following description of the acceptance of this program in a Michigan rural county shows what may be done. Through the efforts of the county school commissioner and others, questionnaires were circulated through the schools of the county to secure the names of persons not in school who would be interested in a class in adult education. The local newspaper also printed the questionnaire. Then organization meetings were called at local school houses to discuss the subjects to be taught and to organize the classes. Results of this effort indicated that there was greatest demand for classes in dramatics, cooking, music, commercial subjects, boxing, and foreign languages. There were fourteen classes in cooking. Over a thousand persons enrolled in music classes and 800 in dramatics. Nearly 500 persons studied art. This program demonstrated amply that there was an interest in continuing education and that most communities have the resources at hand or can find the resources to develop this interest. The acceptance of this program on such an extensive scale in this county and elsewhere

would seem to furnish unquestioned proof of the need for a systematic, well-planned program of adult education.

The folk school movement as developed in Denmark has not appeared in the United States except in a few instances. One example of such a school is at Ashland College, Grant, Michigan. Winter sessions have been held at this school for five years, and it is reported that the course has met with continuous success. During the last year courses were offered in Social Trends in Modern Literature, Psychology, Modern World History, Recent American History, Home Economics, and in Artcrafts. The success of this school and the appeal which work of this kind has to modern rural youth causes one to wonder if this project and other similar ones may not portend the development of a great folk school movement in the United States. Surely it has been amply demonstrated that a large percentage of the men and women who will be the farmers and the farmers' wives of the future will not be college graduates or even graduates of high schools. Yet, if farmers are to be progressive and socialized, they desire and need education and training such as a folk school can give.

At this point the short courses in agriculture which are given by the Agricultural Colleges during the winter season should not be overlooked. Every year hundreds of young men from the farms enroll in these courses and profit greatly by the information which they receive. The curriculum pertains strictly to farm problems and consequently is very valuable in giving training for farming. But these persons need more than technical knowledge about farming, they need information and inspiration regarding the social basis of rural life and the means of developing and conserving community resources. If the curricula of the short courses in agricultural colleges could be broadened to include instruction in art, literature, social science, and other subjects similar to that given in folk schools, it is possible that these short courses could supply to some extent the place of the folk school in the United States.

*Youth and Religion*—One of the problems which inevitably confront youth is the problem of developing a satisfactory phi-

losophy of life. This involves religion, and youth naturally looks to the church as the organized and established agency for nurturing religious growth. But what youth finds at the church is not always satisfying or helpful. Too often he is confronted with a traditional procedure and interpretation dominated by an older group. To this youth frequently protests inwardly, if not in an overt manner, and leaves the church and its program to the elders who seek to control its destiny. It is true that most rural churches have Sunday Schools and a young people's organization which reach a certain number, but general observation and studies which have been made regarding this point indicate that the proportion of the young people so reached is declining. Instead of seeking guidance and stimulation from the church, many young people are turning to various other sources for guidance in a philosophy of life. A certain number apparently give up the endeavor to think seriously about such questions and are contented with such pleasures of the moment as they can find or afford. This state of affairs is unfortunate both for the churches and for the young people, because the church cannot exist without the support and interest of youth. It might be added that youth cannot easily exist without the stimulation and guidance which churches can give. The present situation is chaotic, and church leaders and seriously minded young people are seeking earnestly a way out of the difficulty.

It seems reasonable to believe that one step which will be effective in this situation would be for adults to give young people a greater responsibility in church activities. Too often the assumption of responsibility in the church program becomes a matter of routine. Young people are left out. There is no basic reason why membership on church boards should not include representatives of youth, for the program needs to be developed for youth quite as much as for the older folks. Rural youth, like youth everywhere, are impatient of tradition and dogma. They want a challenging program of action and a religious creed that will be as comprehensive and dynamic as life itself.

*Youth and Family Life*—The problems of youth in this con-

nection center around, first, the adjustment which must be made to the parental family situation, and second, courtship and mating. It has been stated that the period of youth is a trying one both for parents and for youth itself. There is the relinquishment of parental control (sometimes reluctantly given) and the floundering of the young person in using the newly achieved freedom to be master of his or her destiny. Youth is impatient with views of elders merely, perhaps, because they are held by them or because the youth considers everything which is favored by the older generation as an indication of conservatism. Parents are perplexed and confused. Consequently numerous difficulties arise.

There are few generalizations that can be made regarding the adjustment of youth to home situations. Like so many adjustments in life it is personal in nature, and, therefore, a variety of solutions are possible. Moreover, it is possible that some of the problems which arise are the culmination of maladjustments originating in childhood. Effects are thus mistaken for causes. The main point, however, is for the parents and youth to seek to understand one another. This understanding, along with the sacrifice and toleration which are characteristics of successful family life, will aid greatly in working out harmonious adjustments. The following quotation illustrates this principle very well.

"Now and then, when a boy begins to assert his rights to liberal spending-money, or a girl to extravagances in dress, or having what some girls and boys call 'real pleasures' in life, it is necessary to inform them that the law gives them no rights to even what they earn before they are of age, while the law of the state puts the parents under obligations to feed, house, clothe and educate them according to their means, but nothing more. When this idea is firmly fixed in the mind that the favors they get are not matters of right, but expressions of love and affection, it is then the proper time to distribute favors, such favors as the parents can afford to give. Spending money does not come as a right, but as a gift, an expression of affection; and it should be given as freely as circumstances allow so long as

the young folks are disposed to use it wisely. In fact, every boy should be trained in a wise use of money before he comes of age; and every girl should be trained to buy, and, as far as possible, to make her own clothes. It is part of her education " <sup>13</sup>

If a count could be made regarding the causes of maladjustments between youth and parents the results would show, probably, that matters pertaining to finances occupy an important place. As the above quotation suggests, young people want to spend more money for their own personal uses than the parents are accustomed to give, if indeed they have any money to give. It would seem, therefore, that this difficulty would be eliminated to some extent if ways could be found for the young people to earn money of their own. In this connection the project work in 4-H club activities, vocational agricultural projects, and father-son partnership agreements would be important. So also, would be other opportunities to earn money.

Adjustment to the problems confronting youth in regard to mating seem even less promising than adjustments in the parental home, so far as the possibility of formulating generalizations is concerned. It is certain that young men and women desire association together and that if this occurs in a wholesome way the result is beneficial. It is certain, also, that a high percentage of the young men and young women will marry and that a majority of them will marry someone in their immediate or nearby community. Residential propinquity has been discovered as an important factor in marriage selection in an urban community,<sup>14</sup> and the probabilities are that it is even more significant in the rural environment where the spatial distribution of the population is greater. The implications of these facts are, then, that it behooves parents to keep the quality of life in the community at a high level, for in so doing their sons and daughters will be more likely to marry desirable companions. The choice of a mate is a strictly personal matter, but, seemingly,

<sup>13</sup> Henry Wallace, *Letters to Farm Folks*, Wallace Publishing Co., 1915. (Quoted with permission)

<sup>14</sup> James H S Bossard, *Residential Propinquity as a Factor in Marriage Selection*, The American Journal of Sociology, Vol XXXVIII, pages 219-224.

ideals are as effective here as elsewhere in directing behavior. These, however, are not developed at the time courtship begins but are the result of a long experience and a fusion of stimuli and ideas from many sources. If the young person has high ideals and a good character the probabilities are that he or she will be dissatisfied with a mate who does not possess similar qualities.

In concluding the discussion about rural youth it should be stated that youth constitutes that part of the population which feels most keenly and quickly the maladjustment in rural life. This group is an indicator, so to speak, of the degree of harmony, or lack of harmony, that exists in modern rural life. The limitations and possibilities of youth are in a general way the limitations of the entire population. There has been some discussion regarding the possibility of a youth movement in this country. Social movements usually originate under stress and strain. If the conditions of rural life become intolerable, and the means of correcting them seem inadequate, then it is quite possible that youth might perfect some sort of an organization and attempt to make changes. As yet, the group has been too ephemeral and the conditions in rural life too hopeful for a nation-wide or even state-wide rural youth movement to develop. The major responsibility in preventing such a turn of events lies with adults themselves and not with youth.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the basic problems which confront individuals during the period of adolescence?
2. What is the approximate percentage of young people in the rural population?
3. Enumerate the responsibilities of communities in assisting youth.
4. Give the purposes of the various organizations interested in youth.
5. Describe the vocational opportunities and limitations which the rural environment offers to youth.
6. Evaluate the high school curriculum from the standpoint of the needs of youth.

7. Describe the means of providing educational advantages for the youth out of school.
8. What are the prospects for the development of the folk school movement in the United States?
9. What may churches do to interest a greater number of young people in their programs?
10. What principal problems of family life confront youth?
11. What are the possibilities of a nation-wide movement on the part of rural youth?

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## CHAPTER VII

### RURAL LEADERS

There has been considerable discussion about the need for leadership in rural districts. A tacit assumption on the part of many persons has existed to the effect that, if leadership could be supplied, the problems of rural people would be well-nigh solved. A part of this discussion is based on the fact that frequently there is a lack of leadership in rural districts and a part arises from a misunderstanding of the origin and function of leadership. A discussion of this subject is warranted, therefore, to eliminate possible misunderstanding and to offer constructive suggestions regarding the rôle of leaders.

The concept of leadership is not easily defined, for its manifestations are variable and involved. It is a common practice, however, to think of leadership in terms of personality. Then the problems of leadership center around the discovery and development of those personality characteristics which contribute to such a rôle. In their *Social Psychology* Mukerjee and Sen Gupta state that persons who possess to the fullest extent the emotions, ideals, and the interests of individuals are basic in a group and that these individuals are its natural leaders.<sup>1</sup> Considered from this abstract point of view, it may be assumed that every group has its leader. Practical experience indicates that this is true. A similar thought is presented in the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, in the following words: "Strictly speaking the relation of leadership arises only where a group follows an individual from free choice and not under command or coercion, and secondly not in response to blind drives but on positive and more or less rational grounds."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mukerjee and Sen Gupta, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, D C Heath and Co., 1928, page 188

<sup>2</sup> Vol IX, p. 282.

Another approach to leadership is to give primary emphasis to the situation in which it arises and to consider as a leader the member of the group who excels in a particular situation. Considered from this point of view, there would be as many leaders as there are situations. Under certain circumstances this view of leadership is helpful, but generally speaking, it is probably more logical to consider as the leader the individual who is most effective in conditioning the responses, and hence in influencing the behavior, of others. Many persons who are leaders usually discover that at first they unintentionally assumed this rôle<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it is possible, in fact inevitable, according to our present understanding of human behavior, that environmental situations contribute greatly to leadership. This is true in two respects. The environment may create urgent demands for leaders; some individuals will then respond in the capacity of leaders. For, as stated by Dr. Mumford in a pioneer study of leadership, "All social changes, whether of a progressive or regressive character, originate in stimuli creating tensions in the social process and demanding adaptive activities. In these adjustment processes the leader finds his chief function."<sup>4</sup> Or secondly, the environment may develop habits and techniques which will aid individuals in performing the duties of a leader. This is what is meant by training for leadership.

Much discussion and research have revolved about the suitability or unsuitability of the rural environment for the production of leaders. Most of these studies are based on analyses of *Who's Who*. Some have shown that country communities contribute proportionally more than urban communities to the number of men listed in *Who's Who*. In justice to cities it should be stated that, when these men were born, proportionally more people lived in rural districts than in cities. A recent article reporting a study of this question shows that the cities produced more than their proportionate share to the list of notables but that the

<sup>3</sup> L. L. Bernard, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, Henry Holt and Company, page 521.

<sup>4</sup> Eben Mumford, *Origins of Leadership*, University of Chicago Press, 1909, page 86.

excess was gradually diminishing.<sup>5</sup> Another study made at an earlier date indicates that the suburb of the large cities leads all types of environments. Villages up to 8,000 in population rank next. Then follow small cities, large cities, and finally the farms.<sup>6</sup> All of these studies tend to substantiate the fact that the place of birth of and by itself is of comparatively little significance. The vital influence in the creation of a leader is a wholesome, stimulating environment in conjunction with good heredity. Generally speaking, cultural facilities are not as amply provided in the country as in the larger towns and cities. Hence not as many leaders of the type listed in *Who's Who* are produced there. But no one has proven that there is lack of latent leadership capacity among the rural population. In fact, the data contained in a recent study of leadership in Montana tend to show that, even though there may be handicaps in the rural environment, in that state at least the rural population furnished its share of leaders to a greater extent than did the urban population.<sup>7</sup> Certainly there are some desirable characteristics in the rural environment for the creation of leadership even if other facilities are absent.

*Qualities of Leaders*—Numerous qualities or characteristics of leaders may be named. Here again the environmental situation is important. If leadership with face-to-face contact groups is considered, then such a quality as pleasing personality is important. In order to be a leader the person must be respected and accepted by the group he is leading. Such a term as "pleasing personality" defies definition, but it may safely be said that it implies co-operative attitudes, sympathy, aggressiveness, a certain degree of spontaneity, freedom from repellent physical characteristics and habits, as well as other qualities. One outstandingly essential quality of a leader is honesty. If the leader is

<sup>5</sup> Roy H. Holmes, *A Study of the Origin of Distinguished Living Americans*, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XXXIV, page 671.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen S. Visher, *A Study of the Place of Birth and of the Occupation of Fathers, from Sketches in Who's Who in America*, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XXX, page 551.

<sup>7</sup> Elmo H. Lott, *Rural Contributions to Leadership in Montana*, Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 262.

not honest, or at least judged to be honest by his group, he cannot perform the rôle of leadership, because followers will not trust him. People might follow a leader who makes a mistake, but they will not follow one who is dishonest with them. Another important quality is good judgment, for it is essential that the leader pass judgment upon numerous situations. If such situations did not exist, the significance of the leader would be greatly minimized. One function of leadership is to interpret and develop programs suitable to the needs and interests of the specific groups under his direction. This is very essential in rural community leadership as elsewhere, because no two communities are exactly alike. Principles and generalizations in social science must be adapted to each specific community situation. Another characteristic of leadership is unselfishness. A person dominated by selfish interests ordinarily will not become a leader, for followers will soon observe the danger of being used as tools to benefit the person trying to lead them.

The qualities mentioned in the above paragraph apply also to persons who lead indirect contact groups. Here, possibly, in addition to such factors as ability, good judgment, and tact, success in expressing ideas in writing will be more important. The detailed study of leaders recorded in *Who's Who* and in *RUS* made by Dr. Thaden shows that these persons are predominately men of middle age or older. Over three-fourths attended college and over two-thirds graduated from college. They are engaged chiefly in professional services and they live in the metropolitan centers.<sup>8</sup> Comparatively few studies of the qualities of leaders in local groups have appeared. However, a beginning has been made. In the State of Washington, for example, a select group of rural leaders named the following qualities most frequently as characteristic of leadership. pleasing personality, tact, education, speaking ability, energy, practical knowledge of farming, love of humanity, honesty, ability as a mixer, and un-

<sup>8</sup> J. F. Thaden, *Leaders, as Recorded in Who's Who in America and in RUS and Their Group and Inter-group Relationships* (Ph D. Thesis, Michigan State College)

selfishness.<sup>9</sup> This same investigation shows that the ages of the 250 leaders selected for study usually varied from 30 to 65 years and that beyond these limits the number of leaders was comparatively small. So, also, do other studies indicate that leaders tend to belong in this age period.<sup>10</sup> The reasons for the middle age group excelling in this capacity are fairly self-evident. Persons under 30 years of age are apt to be too immature and inexperienced to be general community leaders, yet there are numerous exceptions, and always there is the desirability of a young person excelling in leadership in types of activities where young people are involved. Persons beyond 60 years of age may have ample experience, but they tend to be less active. However, there are variations; the study in Washington shows 36% of the leaders considered to be over 70 years of age.<sup>11</sup>

Generally speaking, formal education is a desirable and essential quality of leadership. Education gives one so many advantages that without a reasonable amount of schooling a person will seldom become a leader. Forty-two per cent of the leaders in Washington completed four years of high school, and 88% completed the eighth grade. No definite minimum limit can be determined for the educational qualifications of leaders. Much depends upon the quality of their training and their ability to utilize the processes of self-education. One rôle of the leader is to acquire and interpret information. Education will probably help him to do this, but his own personal efforts will be more determinative than formal training. It is almost invariably true that leaders are members of various organizations in the communities where they live and work. Membership in organizations is decidedly socializing in its effects. By participation in group activities an individual attains a certain balance and viewpoint which helps him assume leadership. A leader needs to know what people do, what their interests are. Not only is it very difficult, it is almost impossible for a person to become a

<sup>9</sup> Harvey W. Starling and Fred R. Yoder, *Local Rural Leaders in Washington*, Washington Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 257.

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Elmo H. Lott, *Rural Contributions to Urban Leadership in Montana*, Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 262.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

leader without such contacts. Referring again to the study of leadership based on *Who's Who* and *RUS*, it is interesting to note that one-half of the persons reporting designated membership in some religious organization, one-half in one or more clubs, one-fifth in one or more fraternal orders, and so on. In fact these men were identified with about three times as many secondary groups as laymen.<sup>12</sup>

*Types of Rural Leaders*—One type of leadership which has done much to improve rural life is the statesman who really understands and works for the interests of rural people. Every generation has such leaders, though some receive more recognition than do others. An example of this type of leader would be Senator Justin S. Morrill, who was instrumental in the establishment of the Land Grant Colleges in the United States. Dr. Edward Wiest writes as follows concerning this gentleman, "While Justin S. Morrill may not be called the father of the American Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, it is certainly true that to him, more than to any other legislator, belongs largely the credit for their establishment and their subsequent development into institutions that will always be useful to the American people."<sup>13</sup> Other leaders of this type are those members of Congress who sponsored the Hatch Act and later the Adams Act, providing for agricultural experiment stations, and also those who were responsible for the law known as the Smith-Lever Act, making possible the participation of the Federal Government in Agricultural Extension work. Practically all laws in state as well as national affairs have had a corps of sponsors who, knowing rural people and their needs, have worked consistently for rural interests.

Another group of leaders who reach rural people largely through indirect methods are those persons, regardless of their occupational or legislative connections, who are able to shape social policies regarding rural life. Here again there are numerous examples in the United States. The membership of the

<sup>12</sup> See footnote 8, *ibid*, page 177.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Wiest, *Agricultural Organization in the United States*, University of Kentucky, page 198.

Country Life Commission appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt constitutes a notable example of leaders of this type. Men like L. H. Bailey, Henry Wallace and Kenyon L. Butterfield were members of this group. Also many of the men at agricultural colleges in every state of the Union have acted in one way or another as leaders of rural people, even though such activities were not specifically stated as a part of their duties.

The editors of farm journals are another important group of rural leaders. These men, through their editorial writing from week to week, mold the thoughts of rural people on many subjects. Such men are loyal to farm life and farmers. They are well-informed and they work for the best interests of rural people, not forgetting that the interests of rural people are inter-related with the welfare of other groups. Some of these editors deal with moral and personal issues in a most effective manner and discuss problems of human relationships in a way that makes a great appeal not only to rural people but to urban residents as well. An outstanding example of a leader of this type was Henry Wallace, (1836-1916), editor of *Wallace's Farmer*. Certain of his editorials have appeared in book form under the title *Letters to Farm Folk*, (The Wallace Publishing Company, 1915) and *Letters to the Farm Boy* (The Macmillan Company, 1900). As one reads these volumes he experiences the stimulation that can come only from a great leader and interpreter. For, as the preface in *Letters to Farm Folk* states, the letters are not agricultural, but human. They deal with a wide range of topics. Home life, boys and girls, the trials and tribulations of farm people are typical examples. In a similar manner the *Letters to the Farm Boy* considers subjects of special interest to the boy—his relationship to parents, his friends, his career, his education and similar topics. No one paragraph can be selected as more representative than others in the treatment of these subjects, but the following one, taken somewhat at random, reflects the spirit and manner in which such articles were written. It deals with the religion of farm folks.

"The religion that fits farm folks must recognize the essential brotherhood of farmers. It must be willing to help the tenant

and the hired hand as well as the rich farmer, and to help in proportion to the need, whatever that may be. It must have depth as well as breadth, however, and must apply to every part of the farmer's life; to his treatment of the soil, to his treatment of the tenant, if he be a landlord, and of the landlord, if he be a tenant; to his treatment of the hired hand and the hired hand's treatment of him. It must apply to home life, to the education of children, to their sports and pastimes. In other words, it must apply to the whole of you—body and spirit".<sup>14</sup>

An objective evaluation of the rôle of editors of farm papers has not been made, but certainly an important place must be given to them and to their writing. Various surveys show that from 75 to 85% of farm homes subscribe to farm journals, and it is safe to say that a fairly large percentage of the subscribers read them regularly.

The officers of national farm organizations and the editors of the official magazines of these organizations perform a rôle in leadership similar to that of the farm editors, though their influence is usually limited to members of their organizations. In some organizations, like the Grange and the Farm Bureau, this membership is large. Consequently their officers influence thousands of farm people.

*Leaders in Local Communities*—From many points of view, *leadership in local communities* constitutes the basic problem in rural leadership. This is true because the ideas and programs of leaders of the type previously mentioned must be interpreted to the people in local communities and a desire must be created for them. An interpretation of the program would involve explaining what it means, why it is needed, and the probable benefits to be derived from it. The means of arousing people to action are more subtle but are just as necessary. The number of persons in a community who can perform these functions varies greatly. It was found in the surveys of the Institute of Social and Religious Research that there was an average of ten

<sup>14</sup> Henry Wallace, *Letters to Farm Folks*, The Wallace Publishing Company, pages 79-80. (Quoted with permission)



people in each village, three to each 1,000 population, whom the people looked upon as leaders.<sup>15</sup>

One source of local leadership is the farmer himself. Farmers are often overlooked in leadership studies, because it is difficult to find a tabulated list of such persons. Yet they are exceedingly important and perhaps they do more than any other single group to influence farm people. The Master Farmer movement has helped to establish a recognition of farmers in this capacity. Records show that Master Farmers do participate in community affairs. A study of 389 Master Farmers by Oliver Stuart Harmer reports the following result in regard to this point.<sup>16</sup>

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY	NUMBER	PER CENT
Club work leader	78	20.1
School board member	260	66.8
President of school board	120	30.8
Community leader	167	42.9
Township officer	149	38.2
County officer	38	9.8
State Senator	5	1.3
State Representative	15	3.9

The data of this study do not reveal to what extent these farmers participated in more than one activity. But it is possible that several did so, for the same study shows that 91.2% were church members and that a large number attended Sunday School, farm meetings, socials and other community meetings. Likewise the study of 250 rural (farm) leaders in the State of Washington showed that an average of over three offices or memberships were held per individual.<sup>17</sup> These persons participated in various activities—Granges, Community Club, Agricultural Extension Activities, and Parent-Teacher Associations.

This study and one made by the Institute of Social and Relig-

<sup>15</sup> Edmund de S. Brunner, *Village Communities*, page 93, George H. Doran Co.

<sup>16</sup> Oliver Stuart Harmer, *The Master Farmers of America and Their Education*, University of Iowa, Studies in Education, Vol. VI, No. 2, page 47.

<sup>17</sup> Harvey W. Starling and Fred R. Yoder, *Local Rural Leaders in Washington*, Washington Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 257.

ious Research indicates that about one-fourth of the leaders are women. It is entirely logical for women to be leaders in community activities which are intended to benefit the home, such as parent-teacher activities and participation in church affairs, but these activities do not in any sense complete the list.

Another type of leadership manifested by farmers is leadership in a particular activity. It may be growing certain kinds of crops, livestock, or any other activity in which the people of the community are interested. In agricultural extension work the term "local leader" is used. The 1932 statistical report of the extension service shows that 145,122 men and 40,096 women co-operated with the county agricultural agents in adult work alone<sup>18</sup> There are thousands of adult result-demonstration projects reported for almost every kind of crop which is of importance in agriculture. A total of 17,938 were listed for alfalfa alone. In most instances these projects were made with the co-operation of farmers. These demonstrations have significance in bringing about improved farm practices. They are also important as a socializing device, because they tend to give various individuals in the community a certain status which otherwise they might not have.

Ministers constitute another source of local leaders in rural communities. The church and pastor, or priest, have always held an important position in rural community life, and, while their influence appears to be less important than in former years, the decline in the rôle of ministers as leaders is probably more apparent than real. One need only to think of the hundreds of sincere and intelligent men from the time of John Frederick Oberlin to the minister in the most humble rural parish today to gain some appreciation of their influence. Week after week and year after year these men share the joys and sorrows of their parishioners and perform the common though noble tasks of baptising, marrying, burying, consoling and preaching in whole-hearted devotion to the great principle of human brotherhood. The nature of the profession of the ministry inevitably makes

<sup>18</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Report of Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Extension Service, 1932.

the minister a leader, because he is an interpreter. Moreover, he is an interpreter of the most profound questions that confront human beings—matters of life, death and relationships to God and fellowman. In order to make religion real the minister must be concerned with the everyday life of the community in which his people live, for it is through their own experience and problems that an interpretation of religion becomes meaningful to them. These statements are made with the full understanding that some ministers do not fulfill the rôle just described. Some are young and inexperienced. Some are uneducated and uninformed. A few seem to be narrow and bigoted. Many are sincere, but they are confused by the complexity of the life they are trying to interpret. The limitations of rural ministers are like the limitations of their people. They are an outgrowth of the minister's inability to apply in the actual situations of everyday life the principles of human relationships which come through an understanding of social processes and a dominating ideal of brotherly love. The failure of ministers to become leaders is not due ordinarily to indifference but to a lack of information about the principles of community development.

Another common source of local community leadership is the public school teacher. The teacher, like the minister, is destined by training and occupation to be a leader. The state requires that teachers meet certain educational standards, and so far as formal training is concerned they are well qualified to become leaders. Their work also gives them practice in interpretation. The community expects teachers to be leaders, especially in educational matters, and teachers have become accustomed to fulfilling this expectation. The most frequent limitation of teachers from the standpoint of leadership is the fact that they may conceive of their duties in too narrow terms and to think of the school without sufficient attention to other activities and interests in community life. If this happens, it is possible for a teacher or a superintendent of schools to develop the school program to such an extent that it will be out of focus with other

phases of community life. Thus it will be unacceptable to the people, regardless of the real value it may have.

Still another exceedingly important type of local rural leadership at the present time is that provided through county agricultural agents. These men have educational training and must be interested in community affairs if their work is to be successful. They are expected to interpret the developments of scientific farming and good marketing practices to the farm population. County agricultural extension agents have learned that efforts spent with groups in the capacity of a leader are much more effective than the same amount of time spent in dealing with persons individually.<sup>19</sup> There are at present approximately 2,300 county agricultural agents employed in the United States and the barest statistical tabulation of their activities shows that their duties are numerous and varied and that they come into direct contact with thousands of people in every state. They organize clubs, plan demonstrations, conduct meetings, visit farms, prepare news articles, and in other ways continually act in the capacity of a leader.

Many politicians are also leaders in local communities. This fact is sometimes overlooked, because oftentimes the individual characterized as a politician is thought of as one who uses the powers of his office or his party to promote his own interest rather than the interests of the community. Yet, there are many exceptions—men hold public office by virtue of the faith the community has in them rather than because of nefarious political tactics. The figures given earlier in the chapter concerning Master Farmers show that a large number of these men held political offices. They were nominated by their neighbors and friends for membership in the Master Farmer group, so it is not probable that they were selfish and unmindful of community interests. The politician is especially qualified by experience to interpret matters of community interest which involve legislation and public policy. It may be that not as high a percentage of politicians as of ministers or teachers are leaders, yet they

<sup>19</sup> M. C. Wilson, *Extension Methods and Their Relative Effectiveness*, United States Department of Agriculture, Technical Bulletin 106.

constitute a group which is important and which will become increasingly so as the activities of government multiply.

The professional group other than teachers and ministers is sometimes a source of leadership in rural communities. Leadership from this group appears to be due primarily to the personality and interests of the individual member of the profession, rather than to the training and experience provided by the profession. One reason for this is the fact that physicians, for instance, are accustomed to meet people as individuals and to deal with them individually rather than in groups. However, when a professional man does become a leader in community affairs, his leadership is likely to be important, because a desirable social status is usually associated with his profession.

*Development of Leaders*—Judging from the discussion in the earlier part of this chapter, it may be assumed that rural leadership involves informing people regarding their needs and problems, providing the general means whereby such problems may be solved, acquiring the skill and techniques necessary to enable the person to perform the rôle of leadership effectively. These three aspects of leadership are developed more or less simultaneously. All are essential, though it appears to be easier for many individuals to acquire the technique of leadership without understanding very well the problems and needs of their people.

One important source of developing rural leaders, which is of comparatively recent origin, is the student section of the American Country Life Association. Through this association the formation of Collegiate Country Life Clubs is promoted in the various colleges, normal schools, and teachers' colleges in the United States. There are many such clubs now organized under various names. They all have a common purpose, namely, the development of an understanding and appreciation of rural life.

The program sponsored by these groups varies greatly, but lectures, discussions and recreational activities make up a fairly large percentage of their activities. One important influence of these clubs is to help college students get a perspective of rural life and to develop a philosophy concerning it which will emphasize those values in rural life which cannot always be measured

in terms of money or in profits and losses. They also inspire students who really appreciate rural life to have the courage to express their convictions in an environment where the idea of urban superiority may be dominant. It seems reasonable to predict that a high percentage of the members of these clubs will be important leaders in rural life in the future.

The 4-H clubs are also an important source of leadership. They stimulate leadership ability among thousands of adults who direct these clubs every year. But they also encourage leadership on the part of the young people themselves. The Agricultural Extension Service reports that in 1931 a total of 15,740 older boys and girls helped in this work. The experience which these young folks get in training for leadership is one of the most important by-products of the 4-H club movement. It develops habits of leadership which become effective in adult life. They learn how to conduct a meeting and to speak before a group in addition to acquiring the ability to plan and carry out a program.

Besides these organizations which are of special interest to young people there are other organizations in rural communities that stimulate leadership. One of the most important is the Grange. The Grange program encourages discussion about community interests and opportunity is given through the organization for persons to learn to express themselves before a group and to plan a program. The work of the lecturer is particularly important in this connection, because it is his duty to lead in the literary and educational work of the Grange. A similar, though possibly more specialized program, is afforded by the Farm Bureau, Farmers' Clubs, or any other organization which brings a group together to accomplish a definite purpose.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does the term *leadership* imply?
2. What do the studies of *Who's Who in America* show regarding the suitability of the rural environment in producing leaders?
3. List the qualities of leaders.

- 4 Describe the way in which different types of leaders perform the rôle of leadership
5. What are the principal leadership activities of local community leaders?
- 6 Evaluate the following from the standpoint of local leadership: (a) farmers (b) ministers (c) school teachers (d) country agricultural agents (e) politicians
7. Describe the influences which are promoting the development of rural leaders.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### DEPENDENTS AND DELINQUENTS IN THE RURAL POPULATION

The rural population is not free from dependent and delinquent persons. Apparently they are not so numerous as in the urban population, but their number is significant enough to warrant consideration. Failure to utilize the best means of helping handicapped persons is a neglected chapter in the story of rural social development, though now there are signs of improvement. No society can remain ignorant of the welfare of its dependent and delinquent groups, and preserve its own stability. Care of the under-privileged is a crucial test of democracy. It indicates how far the spirit of altruism and mutuality has developed on the one hand and how cognizant the people are of social conditions on the other.

There is a paucity of data showing the importance of the dependent and anti-social classes in rural districts, numerically, economically and socially. For the most part students of rural life are forced to rely on inferences and generalizations that have been developed in the subject of social pathology. Using information in this field as a guide, a rough division of these classes in rural society may be made and some pertinent statements concerning their care and treatment presented. The classes are as follows: (1) persons permanently dependent due to old age; (2) persons having permanent physical or mental defects; (3) persons or families temporarily in need; (4) dependent non-resident families; (5) widows with small children; (6) dependent and neglected children; (7) juvenile delinquents; (8) adult delinquents. Each of these groups will now be considered.

*Persons Dependent Due to Old Age*—These persons are usually cared for by relatives, as is the custom throughout the United States. Farming is an occupation that induces saving, so most farm people who reach their declining years have either



property, or relatives who can care for them. Exceptions are persons who have had severe and continuous misfortunes, the improvident, and those who cannot stay with relatives.

When old persons become permanently dependent upon the public, the practice is to place them in the almshouse, or what is frequently called the poorhouse.<sup>1</sup> In rural or semi-rural districts the institution is owned and maintained by the county. Usually a farm is operated in connection with the building, so that inmates who are able may work on the farm. Owing to the fact that the almshouse is a public institution, it has become a catch-all for several kinds of dependent persons. Not only does it house paupers, but people who are incapacitated for work due to mental or physical ailments, and children. For instance, the census report on almshouses for 1923 shows that, at the beginning of that year, 1,720 children under fourteen years of age were in institutions of this kind.<sup>2</sup> Obviously this institution is not well suited for children and can seldom give them the care and training necessary for their well-being. Some of the more important weaknesses of the county almshouse are: (1) its small size which does not make possible the use of efficient methods in caring for inmates; (2) its lax conditions of admission; (3) the fact that the superintendent often lacks training for his position.<sup>3</sup>

A detailed survey of almshouses or county infirmaries in Michigan shows that even from the standpoint of physical equipment there are certain outstanding defects. The fire hazard is great. In some cases there are no fire escapes; in other instances where fire escapes exist they are not easily accessible. The toilet and bathing facilities are inadequate; the dining rooms frequently are poorly ventilated and lack proper provision for serving food. The sitting rooms and sleeping rooms are

<sup>1</sup> A few rural counties do not have an almshouse but "board out" their aged dependents at the expense of the county. Under this method supervision of the boarding homes is difficult and there is danger that the dependents will be exploited.

<sup>2</sup> *Paupers in Almshouses*, Bureau of Census, 1923.

<sup>3</sup> For a longer list of weaknesses, see J. L. Gillin, *Poverty and Dependency*, D. Appleton-Century Company, page 173.

cheerless and barren, lacking even the ordinary touches which would make them appear more homelike.<sup>4</sup>

Such weaknesses indicate at once the need for corrective measures. These measures consist first of all in securing more efficient management and in classifying persons who are sent to the almshouses. Too often the public feels that a piece of land and a large building are the necessary requisites for an institution of this kind. Living conditions are sadly in need of improvement in most almshouses.<sup>5</sup> More physical comforts need to be provided, and especially more opportunity for contact through reading and other forms of mental stimulation for those inmates who can utilize these advantages.

The small size of almshouses makes it almost impossible to classify inmates or to inaugurate other methods that result in greater efficiency. They are also more expensive. The higher expense per inmate in small institutions is well demonstrated by the following figures secured from a census report on the cost of American almshouses.<sup>6</sup>

NUMBER OF INMATES	NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS REPORTING	AVERAGE NUMBER OF INMATES	AVERAGE MAIN- TENANCE COST PER INMATE
1-10	787	5 6	\$508 13
11-25	586	16.5	333 59
26-50	334	35 8	335 50
51-100	202	62.1	334 56
101-200	80	142.1	330.66
201-500	36	287.0	300 91
501-2,000	16	747 4	293.88
Over 2,000	5	2,357.4	342 16

There can be little doubt about the economy of an institution large enough to make economical use of buildings and of the time of a well-trained superintendent. In some rural areas such

<sup>4</sup> Opal V Matson, *Local Relief to Dependents*, Michigan Commission of Inquiry into County, Township and School District Government

<sup>5</sup> For a description of living conditions in almshouses, see *The Cost of American Almshouses*, United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No 386

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, pages 17 to 21.

an institution can be secured only by consolidation; that is, two or more counties will have to unite in supporting one almshouse instead of each county maintaining a separate institution. Some state laws now provide for this action on the part of the counties and it has been recommended in others. Up to the present time little progress in this direction has been made because of opposition, mainly political, to removing the almshouse from the county. The only feasible plan left, therefore, is to improve existing almshouses as much as possible, even though they are small. Future generations may be more responsive to the needs of their dependent persons.

There are other factors, however, besides size of an institution that help determine the cost of keeping inmates. Value of produce sold from the farm, amount of work done by inmates and the ability of the manager are important items. Furthermore, low cost is not the only objective that should be kept in mind when considering the efficiency of an almshouse. Low cost is desirable only when accompanied with adequate care of the inmates. Such care implies at least clean, wholesome food and sanitary, comfortable living quarters.

Possibly the most important step at the present time in securing an improvement of the whole situation pertaining to almshouses would be the employment of a trained social worker in each rural county, or in a group of adjoining counties, if the density of population happened to be exceptionally low. Such a worker could investigate cases about to be sent to almshouses and might arrange for their care in other ways after careful and detailed investigations were made. This worker might also find profitable employment for some persons now at almshouses and help to devise ways of using the time of others who cannot perform work that is remunerative. For example, children in these institutions need special care and attention. Some of them are subnormal mentally and are handicapped in other ways. Under present conditions many of them are not being trained to develop the powers they have in the most advantageous manner. Finally, a trained social worker could interpret to the

public the importance and economy of modern social work technique in caring for persons in need of help

*Persons Having Physical and Mental Defects*—Most individuals belonging to this group should be kept in institutions especially provided for their care, rather than in almshouses. But evidently they are not all cared for in this way. The following data show the number of defective inmates in almshouses in 1923, grouped according to their defects: <sup>7</sup>

DEFECT	NUMBER DEFECTIVE		PER CENT OF TOTAL IN ALMSHOUSES DEFECTIVE	
	Enumerated Jan 1, 1923	Admitted During 1922	Enumerated Jan 1, 1923	Admitted During 1922
Total defective	36,700	15,669	100 0	100 0
Insane	2,052	2,091	5.6	13 3
Feeble-minded	12,183	4,591	33.2	29.3
Epileptic	1,066	477	2 9	3.0
Deaf-mute	524	137	1.4	.9
Blind	3,045	849	8.3	5 4
Crippled	15,415	6,914	42 2	44.1
With two or more defects	2,415	610	6 6	3.9

It is thus apparent that a large number of persons besides the aged are in almshouses, and that many of them are persons who could be more adequately cared for in other institutions. The data in the foregoing table substantiate the point that there is need for regulation and classification of persons who enter these institutions.

*Persons or Families Temporarily in Need*—People who are the victims of illness, disaster, unemployment, etc., may be classed in this group. They differ from the groups previously mentioned because their difficulty is temporary rather than permanent. In rural communities a majority of these people are cared for either by public relief in their own homes, or by donations which neighbors, friends and philanthropic organizations in the community contribute. Persons or families that are respected by neighbors seldom need to appeal to public authorities

<sup>7</sup> *Paupers in Almshouses*, Bureau of Census, 1923.

for help in a temporary emergency. Semi-transient and chronically improvident families are usually the ones that go to the public officials. Neighbors are less likely to help them.

The prolonged period of economic depression following 1929 tended to cause a large number of families in rural areas to seek relief from public sources. Some of these were farm laborers or those who owned a very small amount of property, but others were families that in ordinary times possessed adequate resources to support themselves and their children. Prolonged drought and other vicissitudes were added to the difficulties created by low prices, and so the need for relief became inevitable. The question of how to help these families to a self-sustaining basis became by 1934 one of the important problems of the Federal and State Emergency Relief Administrations. In this attempt at rehabilitation the government proposes first of all to find out the capacities and resources of these families and then to aid them with loans for livestock and equipment so they may become self-supporting; or, if conditions do not warrant such a program, move them to a more favorable environment. The depression has served to throw into relief the weaknesses as well as the positive aspects of rural life. The problem in rehabilitation is to develop the positive aspects through good social case work methods and community planning.

In the rural parts of the United States, public out-door relief is administered in two ways. It may be controlled by the county board of supervisors, or commissioners as they are sometimes called, or it may be administered by township officials, usually township trustees. Certain weaknesses in these methods are likely to appear. When the county system is used, it is impossible for officials, who have numerous other duties and interests, to become acquainted with persons demanding relief, or to deal with them wisely. Such officials have to rely on the advice of other individuals who may not understand the real nature of the problem. Consequently, the aid which they give cannot be carefully supervised. The inability of county officers to do this work well has favored the employment of persons who can devote all of their time to the task. Under the township system

there is opportunity for the official to know the individual or family asking for help, but the average officer still lacks the necessary technique and experience to deal adequately with the various demands that arise. Under this plan the administration of relief is usually incidental to other duties.

Social case work is rapidly becoming a necessary step in the adequate dispensation of out-door relief. It is generally used in cities and has a place in rural communities as well. Investigation and supervision by a trained social worker have proven to be an economical investment for the donors of funds and a benefit to those who receive them. When such investigation is made, the family or person is helped financially only to the extent that it is absolutely necessary. But what is more important, they are helped to carry out plans that prevent a repetition of demand for relief at some future time. Several states now make provision in their laws for the employment of a trained social worker, who, in addition to other duties, may investigate the applications for poor relief. In North Carolina the county superintendent of public welfare is charged with this duty, while in Minnesota the executive secretary of the county child welfare board may be appointed as supervisor of poor relief.<sup>8</sup>

The diagrams for North Carolina and Wisconsin (pp. 158-9) illustrate in a general way the laws which are being enacted for county welfare departments and the employment of trained social workers.<sup>9</sup>

These laws make provision for the state, through its board of control or welfare department and through power of appointment and in an advisory capacity, to have general supervision over the county welfare departments. Also, where state funds are involved, as may be true with certain types of dependents, the control exercised by the state is more definite, particularly in establishing minimum standards which must be maintained. State control is generally accepted now in education, health,

<sup>8</sup> Emma O. Lundberg, *County Organization for Child Care and Protection*, United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, Bureau Publication 107.

<sup>9</sup> Opal V. Matson, *Local Relief to Dependents*, Michigan Commission of Inquiry into County, Township and School District Government,

road building and a number of other activities. There is no valid reason for not extending it also in the field of public welfare.

Although it has been estimated that a ratio of one trained social worker per 10,000 population would be logical and necessary, actual figures show that this ratio is seldom found. A study by the United States Children's Bureau in nine states where the county plan is most generally developed furnishes a basis for the following statement. "Of the counties in these states having 30,000 or more population 85% were employing paid workers, as compared with 42% of the counties of 20,000 but less than 30,000 population and 9% of the counties having less than 20,000 population".<sup>10</sup>

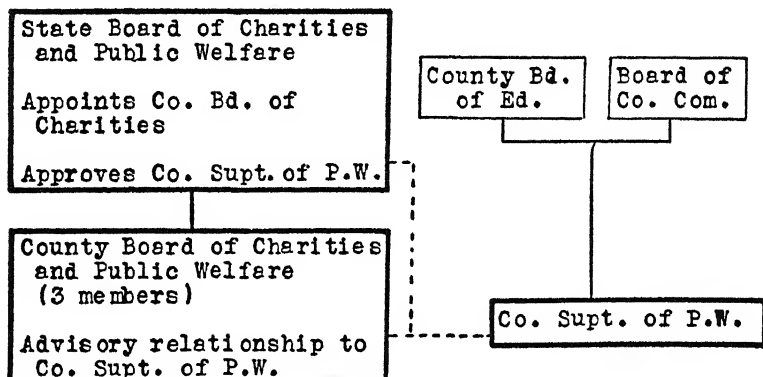
It is true that the term "trained social worker" is not well understood in rural areas. A general belief exists that anyone of good moral character and reasonable intelligence may perform the duties of a social worker, but this view is erroneous. Social work deals with problems of human adjustment and human personality. These problems are exceedingly intricate and complex, requiring the greatest possible amount of knowledge and skill to deal with them in ways that will be most beneficial to the individuals themselves as well as to their community. It is true that the problems can be handled in a rule-of-thumb fashion, but most likely the results will be as futile as the methods used. In order to ensure the employment of trained county workers one or more of the following measures have been incorporated into the laws establishing county boards.<sup>11</sup>

1. Certification of workers according to qualifications set by the State Department.
2. Statutory definition of qualifications for appointees.
3. Requirement of approval of appointments by the State Department of Welfare.
4. Appointment from an eligible list submitted by the State Department of Welfare.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Ruth Colby, *The County as an Administrative Unit for Social Work*, United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau Publication No. 224.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

## NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY BOARDS OF CHARITIES AND PUBLIC WELFARE



### Duties of County Board of Charities:

To advise and assist the State Board in the work of the county, to make such visitations and reports as the State Board may request and to act in a general advisory capacity to the county and municipal authorities in dealing with questions of dependency and delinquency, distribution of the poor funds and social questions.

Advise with County Supt. of Public Works

Approve applications for Mother's Aid.

Under ruling of St. Board approve applicants for position of County Supt. of Public Welfare.

### Duties of County Superintendent of Public Welfare:

Poor relief for the County Commissioners.

Act as agent of the State Board for work in County.

Supervision of persons discharged from State institutions and prisoners paroled or on probation.

Oversight of dependent and delinquent children, especially those on parole or probation.

Promote wholesome recreation.

Oversight of children placed in county by St. Bd.

Assist in finding employment.

Investigate causes of distress.

(Consolidated Statutes, 1927, secs. 5015-5018, incl.)



WISCONSIN COUNTY CHILDREN'S BOARD

State Board of Control

County Board of  
Supervisors

Judge of Juvenile C.

County Children's Board  
5 members (2 women)  
2 appointed by St. Bd. of C.  
1 appointed by Judge of J. C.  
Chairman of County Board  
1 elected by other 4

Personnel

Duties of County Children's Board:

Investigate conditions surrounding mentally defective, dependent, neglected, delinquent and illegitimate children and take action to secure for them the benefit of laws enacted. Administer county funds for the care of these children.

Investigate applications for aid to dependent children.

Upon request of Juvenile Court Judge, do investigatory work and supervise children placed on probation.

Upon request of State Bd. of Control assume oversight of juveniles on parole.

When so directed by County Board administer poor funds.

Make reports to State Board of Control and to County Board of Commissioners.

(Laws of 1929, ch. 439, sec. 48.20, 48.30, 48.31.)

Under these provisions there is considerable variation in actual practice. Social work is in the process of becoming professionalized; consequently requirements are not definitely established. At the time the Children's Bureau publication just referred to was prepared, Alabama was the only state providing for certification of workers. The requirements for certification there are (1) Graduation from a recognized college or university; (2) three years' teaching experience, or three years' experience with some recognized social agency; (3) definite training for social work.<sup>12</sup> The results of this plan in Alabama have been satisfactory, and probabilities are that similar requirements, if not certification, will be made in other states.

The greatest need in connection with relief furnished by private sources, as with public sources in rural areas, is intelligent direction. Often, when a family lacks food or clothing, people will give in abundance with no thought as to how it will be used. If the family is improvident, it may become dependent again in a short time and furnish donors an opportunity to repeat their giving. In former times, when the relationships among families were more personal than they are now, a certain amount of supervision and guidance ordinarily accompanied the gift. Now those relationships have diminished in number, hence the need for supervision is greater. It is a well-known fact among social workers that the most apparent problems of the family or individual may not be the fundamental ones. The general dissemination of information about modern methods of relief-giving will greatly assist people in understanding how to help wisely, but detailed investigation and supervision can be done most satisfactorily by a person who is trained for it.

Supplies of food and clothing are not the only problems, or even the most serious ones, that sometimes confront farm families. Often it is a problem of getting some kind of farm work done at the proper time. Not infrequently neighbors cultivate corn, sow grain and assist in harvesting crops for a family that is handicapped by sudden illness or misfortune. Such practices are examples of mutual aid and friendliness that any neighbor-

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17

hood can ill afford to lose. When disasters cover a wide expanse of territory, and many families are made destitute, the relief department of the American Red Cross comes to the rescue. The work of this organization is of great importance in providing help in a systematic way for large numbers of families. Its services, or those of a similar organization, are indispensable in modern times.

*Dependent and Non-Resident Families*—These families constitute a problem not only for public authorities but for philanthropic agencies as well. Their numbers have increased in recent years since it became easy and inexpensive to travel in an old automobile. Such families often work during a part of the year on farms and then move into town during the winter. When some real or imagined misfortune befalls them they call on the usual sources for help. If aid is forthcoming, the calls are repeated again and again until authorities take some definite action in the matter. A common practice with some officials is to order such families to leave the town or county. The family then moves to another place where it is not so well known and repeats the usual demand for help. Hence, ordering such people to leave the town or county is only temporarily effective and in no sense a constructive remedy. The problem of dealing with transient families is a perplexing one and is growing in rural areas.

*Widows with Small Children*—The widow with small children in rural districts possibly faces a less serious problem than a woman under similar circumstances in the city. Food and housing are cheaper in the country, and, if there is sufficient property, the family can manage to get along until the children are old enough to support themselves. If there is no property from which an income may be derived, the widow living in the country may secure aid through what is popularly called "mother's pensions", just as a city mother may do. Laws providing funds for this purpose are enacted in nearly all states. Their dispensation is generally controlled by the juvenile court, though in some states the county, town, or city boards that supervise the poor relief have this duty. It is impossible, however,

for the official in charge to understand adequately all cases. Aid is given sometimes when the circumstances do not justify it. Furthermore, unless supervision by a trained worker is continued after the relief is once granted, there can be no certainty that money will be used advantageously, particularly from the standpoint of the children. The advisability of employing a trained social worker to supervise these allowances is unquestioned. Counties that employ one usually find that they save more than the expense of the worker and fulfill the purposes of the law more satisfactorily.

*Dependent and Neglected Children*—Social workers who have had experience in rural districts know that every community almost invariably has its quota of dependent and neglected children. Their dependence and neglect arise from circumstances very similar to those prevailing in cities. Death of one or both parents, illegitimacy, divorce, desertion and feeble-mindedness are common causes. There is a tacit assumption on the part of most people that anyone having a child is capable of caring for it. Relationships in rural communities are still somewhat personal, consequently neighbors hesitate to report cases of dependent and neglected children to proper authorities. These authorities, in turn, are often hesitant to act in ways most advantageous to the child. If the rural child should become dependent to the extent that some public action is necessary, then the procedure in caring for it is similar to that in the city. It is the *neglected child* in the country who is most frequently handicapped by the rural environment. The rural home is more isolated than the urban dwelling; public attention and law can, therefore, be evaded to some extent in the country. Neglect occurs in several ways. It may appear in matters pertaining to health and education. Grossly immoral conditions sometimes prevail, or the child may be subjected to unreasonable physical abuse, including overwork.

The country has lagged behind the city in developing machinery to care for the neglected child. Special problems have to be met. The cases are scattered and consequently are less numerous in a given area. Rural people are not cognizant of the value

of modern methods in dealing with dependent and neglected children, or children likely to become so. Nevertheless, at least two principles in rural child welfare seem to be fairly well established. First, the county appears to be the most satisfactory unit from the standpoint of supervision and administration. Nearly all laws recommended or enacted to promote child welfare in rural areas have favored the county as the local unit through which both public and private agencies may work, either co-operatively or independently of each other. Second, the services of a trained worker are needed. The processes involved in modern social case work require considerable knowledge and training on the part of the worker. Untrained persons, although they may have very good intentions, cannot reach the same degree of success as social case workers. They often cause it to fail temporarily, and prejudice the public against it.

*Juvenile Delinquents*—The delinquent child presents a different problem from one who is dependent or neglected. Delinquency involves the whole question of human behavior and the factors influencing it. The rate of delinquency appears to be relatively low in the country because the following conditions prevail: (1) there are fewer laws and ordinances to disobey; (2) existing laws are not strictly enforced; (3) if a rural child commits a delinquent act he is likely to be caught and punished by his parents; (4) there is no one to whom delinquencies can be reported readily. Nevertheless, delinquent acts do occur in the country, and they are a social problem confronting people in all rural communities.

The social machinery for dealing with rural juvenile delinquents is not well developed. Laws are provided for the establishment of juvenile courts in rural counties, but these courts, as a rule, do not have a judge who is especially trained for juvenile court work. The work is handled in connection with other duties, and while the judges are well-meaning men, there is danger that they will follow a theory of retribution rather than reformation in dealing with the young delinquent. If this happens, the primary purpose of the juvenile court is not realized. Furthermore, probation service is often poorly devel-

oped, or is lacking entirely, so a judge could not put a delinquent on probation under auspicious conditions, even if he recognized clearly the value of this method of treatment. Lack of effective probation service is the greatest weakness of juvenile court systems in rural sections. It is unwise to expect that a delinquent will change his habits very much if he is admonished by the court and permitted to go his way without supervision. Behavior is largely a result of environmental influence, and unless the person receives guidance and help in making adjustments to his environment, he is apt to commit delinquent acts again. Probation does not imply just letting the person go, or giving the offender another chance. It is, rather, the constructive application of all that is known about the principles of human behavior in guiding the career of persons who in all probability can profit by it. Only a trained person can be a successful probation officer. Possibly one of the wisest investments a county or group of counties could make would be to spend \$2,500 to \$3,000 annually in getting the services of a person who is prepared by training, experience and personality for this work. Delinquent behavior, especially on the part of adults, is expensive. It is more economical to correct it in its incipient stages than it is to wait until the delinquency assumes serious proportions.

*Adult Delinquents*—Unlawful acts on the part of adults are not infrequent in rural sections, nor do they differ radically from delinquent acts in the city. They consist mainly in crimes against property, violation of traffic laws and, in dry states, the illegal manufacture and possession of liquor. The chief officer to enforce law in rural districts is the county sheriff. His services are supplemented in various parts of the county by town marshals and constables. But the area in a county is large, so the protection afforded by always having an officer nearby is lacking.

In recent times, as improved roads and automobiles have come into general use, the county sheriff has been unable to cope with the problem of law enforcement. Law violators may rush into the county, commit a crime, and then escape to a large city

before the sheriff can arrest them. State police systems which have been established in several states have proven to be an effective addition to the existing law-enforcing agencies in rural territory. When equipped with motorcycles, these officers can go from one county to another very quickly, and if their headquarters are located at strategic points, police protection is available in practically every county. In a few states there has been considerable opposition to state police, and bills to establish the system have been defeated. Opposition has arisen because some people believe that the power thus given to the state might be used to their disadvantage, especially when police protection is needed in connection with labor disputes. However, it is certain that some method which embodies a state-wide system of law enforcement is very necessary at the present time, so great has the problem of law enforcement become.

If an adult is arrested for violating the law and must be held until time for trial, he is kept in the town or county jail. These jails are often unsanitary and poorly equipped buildings. Inspection of jails is provided for in the laws of most states and minimum requirements regarding the structure and conditions pertaining to sanitation are established. But the enforcement of these standards depends to a great extent upon the attitudes of people in the local community. Many county jails are old structures, and people are not inclined to invest money in a new building. There is no excuse, however, for not keeping the building clean and sanitary. This requirement should be strictly enforced.

It is a general practice now to confine persons who receive short sentences of 30, 60 or 90 days in the county jail. Prisoners of all kinds are allowed to communicate with one another when so confined. If a person is not acquainted with criminal methods before he enters a jail, there is danger that he will become familiar with them before leaving. In some counties provision has been made to separate the convicted person from the non-convicted person, but this practice is not generally followed. The methods of administration and supervision of jails in the United States were imported from England nearly 300 years

ago Since that time England has made vast improvements in this phase of public activity.<sup>13</sup> But the United States has not been so progressive.

State farm colonies for delinquents have been recommended and established in some parts of the United States. Such a farm is owned by the state and is equipped to take prisoners who receive short sentences. When this facility is available convicted persons may be sent to the farm, rather than be confined in a jail where they must spend their time in idleness. At the farm they engage in farm work and other kinds of beneficial labor. The establishment of these farms secures indirectly an improvement of conditions in county jails, because a certain number of people are removed from them as soon as they receive a sentence.

Probation work for adult delinquents is developing but slowly in rural districts. It has many advantages when wisely used and is destined to become more common in the future. Laws in several states make provision for adult probation, but they are not adequately carried out. A great danger in adult probation work is the fact that untrained persons are frequently appointed as probation officers. Consequently, the purpose and possible benefits of the laws are not realized. Unless adult probation officers are well qualified for the work by training, experience and personality they cannot be successful.

*Rural Social Work*—Several times in the preceding paragraphs mention has been made of the need for a trained social worker. It is obvious that nearly all kinds of social problems arise in the country just as they do in the city. The chief difference is the fact that in the city they occur more frequently because the density of population is higher. Consequently, social work is concentrated there to some extent. There are workers who devote all their time to child welfare problems. Some specialize in probation work, while others deal only with cases of poor relief.

In rural districts the density of population is lower and the demands for the services of a social worker are more scattered.

<sup>13</sup> Hastings H. Hart, *The Rural Jail*, Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work, 54th Annual Meeting, pages 156-157.



Specialization cannot be developed so far in the country as in the city. The most feasible plan now, apparently, is to have one trained worker in each rural county employed in some capacity or other. The worker may be hired to supervise mothers' pensions, promote child welfare work or act as a probation officer. Or, these tasks may be combined in various ways. In any event, it is highly desirable that this worker, in addition to the assigned tasks, will spend some time in doing what may be called "undifferentiated social work". Such work will deal with the most urgent cases and problems, regardless of their type. Then, if the worker is successful and persistent, the nature and value of social work will gradually become apparent to the people. With this as a foundation, plans may be developed to employ one or more social workers in other fields, and thus a degree of specialization and thoroughness consistent with economy and effective service may be achieved.

The possibility and feasibility of social workers, employed by city agencies, extending their activities to surrounding rural territory is an open question. Problems of finance, transportation and personnel are involved. The future experience of communities that try out this sort of co-operation must be a guide for any possible plans of this sort. Cities have had experience for a comparatively long time in various kinds of social work, and rural communities may profit by the principles that have been developed. Furthermore, some cities are so situated that they may experiment, at least in a mild way, in extending their services to adjacent rural territory. In fact, a certain amount of inter-relationship with the country can scarcely be avoided.

However, at the present time, conflict rather than co-operation tends to characterize relationships between town and country. Unless due caution is exerted the country dwellers may look upon any advances made by social work agencies in a nearby city as another evidence of city superiority and domination. It seems reasonable to believe that any plans of extending social work from city to country would necessitate an endorsement by the rural people. If this can be secured, then social work, stressing as it does fundamental human values, may become an

important aid in causing town and country groups to solve their problems in a co-operative manner.

The country does not have as much wealth as the city, and it is doubtful if any significant sums of money could be raised in the country by voluntary means for welfare work. Whatever monetary support the country may give will probably have to come from public funds. At first thought this may seem discouraging, because country people are adverse to increases in taxes. Yet, if the county is made the unit for the administration of social work, as it apparently will be, the taxable wealth of both the towns and rural districts will contribute to its financial support. In most cases the county represents a unit of wealth sufficiently large to carry the expense of social work without imposing an excessive burden on the individual taxpayer.

It is probably desirable to initiate social work with taxation funds. While it may be more difficult to secure such support in the beginning, its continuance and regularity are more certain and the possibility of expansion is greater. Agriculture is the major industry in rural areas. During years of crop failure, when funds probably are needed most, the chances of securing them from private sources are diminished. If funds were raised by taxation, they would be available in poor years as well as in prosperous times. County agricultural agents have been employed for several years with money raised by taxation, and more recently the same method of paying public health nurses has been used. Greater sums of money are being spent for these workers in rural districts each year. There is no reason to believe that rural people will not accept the responsibility of paying for social work if its value can be sufficiently demonstrated to them.

Social workers who have had experience in dealing with rural people testify that personal relationships play a much greater rôle in rural than in urban districts. It is well-nigh impossible to work with a rural family and have the neighbors unaware of it. Hence, the social worker must be prepared to have her activities continually scrutinized from all angles. This circumstance may be advantageous, for community responsibilities and

community relationships can then be demonstrated more easily. But there is no indication that rural communities will become so socially responsive that cases demanding the attention of social workers will not occur. Rural life is too dynamic for that. Population shifts, poverty, degeneracy, and child neglect appear even in the most advanced rural sections. It is the task of the social worker to investigate these cases and make sure that the community does its part.

The success of social work in rural communities depends upon the personality and training of the worker who introduces it. In the beginning the people are more concerned about the person than they are about the work to be done, and no one who fails to be "accepted" by the rural group will succeed. This is true because, as has been stated several times in this book, personal relationships are very important in the country. If the people are convinced that the worker is a good, honest, sincere and industrious person, they are then ready to be interested in her job and will respect honest, intelligent effort.

The specific qualifications of such a worker are numerous—in addition to a knowledge of case work and the principles of rural community organization, love of country, friendliness without an undue amount of formality, willingness to let others take credit for work she has had a share in doing, executive ability, and good judgment are among the most important ones.<sup>14</sup>

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the principal means of caring for aged, dependent persons in the rural population?
2. List the weaknesses or defects of almshouses as homes for dependent persons.
3. Compare the efficacy of the township system and the county system in the administration of relief to persons or families temporarily in need.
4. Why is social case work important in the administration of relief in rural areas as well as in urban areas?

<sup>14</sup> Josephine C. Brown, *The Rural Community and Social Case Work*, Family Welfare Association of America, pages 69-71

5. What are the qualifications of a social worker?
6. What is the greatest need in rural areas in connection with relief supplied by private sources?
7. What safeguards should be used in extending aid to widows with small children?
8. Why is the neglected child in the country likely to be especially handicapped by the rural environment?
9. What circumstances make the rate of delinquency appear to be low in the country?
10. What are the weaknesses of the methods of dealing with juvenile delinquents in rural communities?
11. What are the defects of the jail system?
12. How may these defects be remedied?
13. Describe the possibilities and limitations involved in the development of modern methods of social work in rural districts?
14. What special qualities does the rural environment necessitate on the part of the rural social worker?

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## CHAPTER IX

### FARM LABORERS IN THE RURAL POPULATION

The last group to receive special consideration in this section dealing with special groups is composed of farm laborers. There are other persons classified in the census as rural who work for wages, but they are not regularly employed on farms and may be considered more properly, perhaps, in village or urban sociology. Farm laborers warrant special study and analysis, first, because the circumstances under which they work are unique, and second, because in certain respects their welfare is associated intimately with that of farm people in general. In fact, some members of farm families are often employed as laborers on their own or on adjoining farms.

*Number of Farm Laborers*—The United States Census contains the most comprehensive available data about the number of farm laborers employed in this country. The group is changing constantly from season to season, so exact numbers can be only approximated. If the Fifteenth Census had been taken in the fall or winter instead of in April, the number of laborers might have been smaller. There were, nevertheless, 3,746,433 males and 648,331 females ten years of age and over reported as gainfully employed in agriculture in 1930. These numbers constituted 9.8% of the total number of males and 6.0% of the total number of females employed in all occupations. In the case of male children, 10 to 17 years of age, 54.5% of the total were engaged in agriculture; while of the female children in this age group only 27.2% were so employed.

Agriculture exceeds other occupational pursuits in the percentage of males employed under 20 years of age. When the age period 65 to 69 is reached it ranks next to public service in the percentage of men who are gainfully employed. These percentages reflect the fact that young persons and persons past

middle age can find employment in agriculture more easily than in industrial establishments. The total number and percentage of persons in the various age groups who were employed either for wages or as unpaid family laborers are given in Table XV.

TABLE XV. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF FARM LABORERS \*

Age Group	Male		Female	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Total	3,746,433	100.0	646,331	100.0
10 to 17 years	776,182	20.7	199,386	30.8
18 to 19 years	478,867	12.8	67,936	10.5
20 to 24 years	812,498	21.5	107,966	16.7
25 to 29 years	404,440	10.8	62,082	9.6
30 to 34 years	249,907	6.7	44,738	6.9
35 to 39 years	204,209	5.5	44,788	6.9
40 to 44 years	166,739	4.5	34,994	5.4
45 to 49 years	157,236	4.2	30,646	4.8
50 to 54 years	114,537	3.8	22,191	3.4
55 to 59 years	141,854	3.0	12,913	2.0
60 to 64 years	96,304	2.6	9,094	1.4
65 to 69 years	71,697	1.9	5,189	.8
70 to 74 years	43,464	1.2	2,479	.4
75 and over	26,236	.7	1,663	.3

\* Source of data *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. IV, Population

*Sources of Farm Labor*—The sources of farm labor are varied. There is, first, the labor furnished by the farm families themselves on their own farm. The value of this labor has been estimated at various times from one hundred to three hundred dollars or more per family per year, depending upon the type of agriculture and the amount of work done.<sup>1</sup> The number of workers so employed totaled 1,659,792 in 1930 according to data given in the Census. A second source of labor is from farm people who work for other farmers. Many of these are young, unmarried men who have insufficient work on the home farm and who consequently seek employment on other farms. But

<sup>1</sup> *Yearbook*, United States Department of Agriculture, 1925, pages 1286 to 1311.

frequently a married man will be employed as a farm laborer. The total number of persons living in rural sections employed as farm laborers not on the home farm amounted to 2,732,972 in 1930. Families that stay in towns and cities during the winter but seek employment on farms in summer furnish a third source of farm labor. Usually these families engage in farm work that will provide employment for their children. Work on truck farms, on berry farms and in sugar-beet fields furnish the principal sources of employment for such families. Many of them are foreigners. Transient workers constitute a fourth source of farm labor. This class includes casual workers of many kinds who are ready to migrate from place to place. These persons seek employment in harvest fields of the West and Northwest or in other parts of the country where an unusual or temporary demand for labor exists.

A possible fifth source of farm labor is the "croppers" of the southern states. These people may be considered as laborers, for they differ from ordinary laborers chiefly in the fact that their pay consists of a share in the crop produced. The farm owner furnishes the necessary capital, including land and work animals, for the production of the crop. The cropper furnishes the labor. In the Census a cropper is defined as a share tenant to whom the landlord furnishes all work animals, and a special classification is made for this group. It is certain that croppers supply a large amount of labor on farms and that they resemble laborers in many ways. There were in 1933 383,381 farms operated by white croppers, and 392,897 operated by colored croppers. Land included in these farms totaled 21,634,698 acres.<sup>2</sup>

Some information which gives a more detailed picture of the sources of farm labor is available. A study of farm labor on 199 farms in Seneca County, New York, showed that about a third of the persons hired as laborers were members of farm families in the region.<sup>3</sup> This county is located in a part of the state where general farming is the predominant type. It is

<sup>2</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. III, Agriculture

<sup>3</sup> *A Study of Farm Labor in Seneca County, New York*, Department of Agriculture (Albany), Bulletin 164, page 18



reported in a study of 395 farm laborers in Massachusetts, that three-fourths of the number lived in the town where employed and half the remainder at least within daily traveling distance of their work.<sup>4</sup> These workers were engaged in fruit and vegetable growing, general farming, dairy farming, and on farms raising tobacco and onions. A study of truck farm labor in New Jersey shows also that farmers hired laborers living in their own or in adjoining localities more frequently than they hired casual laborers.<sup>5</sup> Finally, a study of harvest labor problems in the wheat belt indicates that some of the workers are residents of towns of the small grain states. Others are men who leave their regular employment to work in harvest fields. A third group employed consists of transient laborers, who usually plan to spend some time in parts of the country where a considerable acreage of grain is grown.<sup>6</sup>

Such are the available facts about the sources of farm labor in the United States. The data suggest the generalization that farmers hire persons in their immediate neighborhoods in so far as possible, but during rush seasons they must depend upon casual workers who migrate to farming sections. It is impossible to tell whether the supply of farm labor is adequate, because so many factors influence the situation. It would not be difficult to find instances of scarcity, and, on the other hand, of surplus of persons who are willing to work on farms. The demand varies from season to season and from year to year. Climatic conditions, farm practices and profits in farming influence the situation. It would be well-nigh impossible, perhaps, to keep a labor reserve ready to fill all the demands farmers occasionally make for laborers. On the other hand, the number of people who are available for farm work is variable. Urban industries can usually outbid farmers for laborers, and if a period of business expansion is in progress, the number of workers

<sup>4</sup> *Farm Labor in Massachusetts*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin 1220

<sup>5</sup> *Truck Farm Labor in New Jersey*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin 1285

<sup>6</sup> *Harvest Labor Problems in the Wheat Belt*, United States Department of Agriculture, Bulletin 1020, page 15.

available for farmers may be diminished materially. Then, when business activity is at a low ebb, there is an oversupply of workers in the country. It is possible that, if the migration of urban workers into rural districts continues, it may be years before there will be a scarcity of labor in rural areas. The development of subsistence homesteads, or subsistence farming as it is called, may have a beneficial influence in this connection, as persons will then reside in rural areas or at least in semi-rural districts.

There have been some attempts to regulate the supply of farm labor so that the demand for it may be more easily and regularly met. During the World War employment offices were established at strategic points, information was gathered about probable demand for laborers, and an effort was made through the public employment agencies to meet it. Since the close of the war the work of these offices has been curtailed, due to lack of funds. So again, the farmers have been obliged to find help without a well-developed system of employment offices. Present methods are unorganized and fail to meet the demand satisfactorily. It is difficult to conceive how an adequate supply of labor can be made available to farmers without a well-organized system of public employment offices under federal supervision. Voluntary co-operation of the states is not sufficient to handle the problem.<sup>7</sup>

*General Characteristics of Farm Laborers (Age)*—A statement previously made indicates that persons of all ages above ten years are employed in agriculture, but the proportion is greater in the case of young and old than of middle-aged persons. The number employed under seventeen years of age is especially high, and persons in this age group are found in all types of agriculture. However, a detailed examination of the Census data shows that a majority of them are employed in general farming, gardening, and in nurseries. Much of the work in these types of farming requires routine hand labor, and young persons furnish a ready supply of it. In other kinds of farm work there appears to be a preference for adults. In the Massa-

<sup>7</sup> For a further discussion of this point, see Shelby M. Harrison and Associates, *Public Employment Offices*, Russell Sage Foundation, page 545.

chusetts study previously referred to, the average age of all workers was 35.2 years, but the range extended from thirteen to seventy-two years.<sup>8</sup> Such data as are available for harvest hands show that only about 10% are under twenty years of age, and approximately 30% twenty to twenty-four years of age. The exact figures as reported in a study of 919 laborers follow:<sup>9</sup>

AGE	NUMBER	PER CENT
Under 20	89	9.7
20-24	287	31.2
25-29	181	19.7
30-34	110	12.0
35-39	96	10.4
40-44	47	5.1
45-49	52	5.7
50-59	45	4.9
60-69	9	1.0
70-79	3	.3

*Nativity and Race*—The nativity of farm labor is an extremely variable factor. It appears that in general farm work the native stock is likely to predominate, but when special types of labor are considered, such as sugar-beet growing and truck farming, the laborers are likely to consist of foreign-born persons or persons of foreign-born parents. Poles, Italians and other nationalities of southern Europe are found in different parts of the country. Recently Mexicans have emigrated to the United States in large numbers and have engaged in many kinds of farm work that involve routine hand labor. The following figures reported in the census for 1930 show the nativity of white males and females classed as farm laborers:<sup>10</sup>

	MALE	FEMALE
Native parentage	2,659,897	203,585
Foreign-born white	194,358	5,221

<sup>8</sup> *Farm Labor in Massachusetts*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin 1220

<sup>9</sup> *Harvest Labor Problems in the Wheat Belt*, United States Department of Agriculture, Bulletin 1020

<sup>10</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol IV, p 25, Population.

There are more white than colored farm laborers among the males, but there are almost twice as many negro female farm laborers as there are white. This difference is due probably to the fact that custom and necessity favor this practice among negro women, whereas among certain groups of white people the labor of women on farms is not considered desirable or advantageous. The census figures pertaining to race and sex follow.<sup>11</sup>

	MALE	FEMALE
White	2,854,255	208,806
Negro	693,669	418,841
Other races	198,509	18,684

*Education*—As may be expected, the majority of farm laborers do not have a great deal of formal education. Otherwise, many of them probably would seek other kinds of employment. However, data are limited in regard to this point. A study of the extent and character of education of 1,016 harvest hands shows that 14.3% had less than fifth grade education; 17.3% were classed in the fifth, sixth or seventh grade; 41.5% had finished the eighth grade. A small number had completed high school or had taken other kinds of courses.<sup>12</sup> In the study of truck-farm labor in New Jersey previously referred to, over half the American-born laborers had received five or more grades of schooling, and slightly more than 10% had received a high school education. In the case of the foreign-born group, a little over 20% had no formal schooling; 10% were self-taught, and about 11% had received five or more grades in the common school. Nearly half of the foreign-born had attended school before coming to the United States.<sup>13</sup>

There is no way to tell if these data are representative of other farm laborers. Probably they are not for some of the foreign-born who have not been reared in the United States. It also

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, page 25

<sup>12</sup> *Sources of Supply and Condition of Employment of Harvest Labor in the Wheat Belt*, United States Department of Agriculture, Bulletin 1211.

<sup>13</sup> *Truck Farm Labor in New Jersey*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin 1285

appears that the education of croppers, who resemble farm laborers in many respects, would not be so high as the foregoing data for American-born laborers indicate. According to a study of 1,014 farm families in North Carolina the average cropper has attained a school status of only the third grade. The average negro has attained less than a full first grade education.<sup>14</sup>

*Occupational and Social Status of Farm Laborers*—Broadly speaking, farm laborers may be divided into two classes—those who expect to become farm owners and those who work for the pay they receive with no thought of becoming farmers themselves. The latter class may be subdivided into: (1) farm laborers with families; (2) casual laborers; (3) child laborers. As a general rule, the first group represents a class of persons who are energetic, ambitious and anxious to learn what they can about the business of farming. Many of them are young men who are sons of farmers. No social distinction exists between this class of laborers and farm owners or tenants. Such a laborer usually gets board and lodging at the farm where he works and not infrequently he marries a young woman who lives on the same or a neighboring farm.

Farm work for the first class of laborers represents the first step toward farm ownership. The usual procedure is to hire out as a wage earner, then become a renter and eventually buy a farm. It was found in a study of rural life in Cedar County, Iowa, that 29.2% of 252 farm owners had passed through all the steps on the road to ownership, that is, they had been hired men and tenants before becoming owners.<sup>15</sup>

The duration of the period as a laborer will vary. Certainly a man who has no other source of capital must remain a laborer until he can purchase enough livestock and equipment to enable him to rent a farm. If he has some other source of wealth the period will be shortened. Some farmers who inherit property or acquire a fair amount of money in other ways never are farm

<sup>14</sup> C. C. Taylor and C. C. Zimmerman, *Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers*, Bulletin, North Carolina State College, Raleigh, 1923.

<sup>15</sup> G. H. Von Tungen and Others, *The Social Aspects of Rural Life and Farm Tenancy in Cedar County, Iowa*, Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 217.

laborers. Data collected by the United States Department of Agriculture show that in the case of persons who became farm owners between the years 1915 to 1920, and who had been both farm wage earners and tenants, had spent an average of 58 years as farm laborers before becoming tenants.<sup>16</sup> Also, a classification of farm owners in the United States Census, according to the variety of farm experience they have had, gives the following results:<sup>17</sup>

Total number	3,529,743
Number reporting experience as owner, tenant and wage hand	724,801
Owner and tenant	837,746
Owner and wage hand	498,639
Owner only	1,468,557
Per cent of total reporting previous experience as	
Tenant	44 3
Wage hand	34 7

Such data as are available seem to show that the capable man who starts as a farm laborer can acquire ownership of a farm in a reasonable length of time. Of course, many circumstances influence his progress in this direction, such as his ability to save money and to reinvest savings properly. Farming is becoming a business enterprise in which business sagacity and knowledge of scientific agriculture make a great deal of difference. Climbing the so-called agricultural ladder may become a more selective process as time goes on, and a greater proportion of the incapable will have to remain farm laborers or seek other kinds of employment. But the matter does not end here; other considerations enter. Farming is an industry that is vital to national welfare, and the human factor plays an important rôle in its effectiveness. It would be an unwise social policy to let conditions exist that prevent capable men from becoming farm owners, just as it is unwise to permit circumstances to prevail that keep bright young men from becoming physicians, lawyers, or engineers. The country needs the most capable class of farmers possible. It is

<sup>16</sup> L. C. Gray and Others, *Farm Ownership and Tenancy*, United States Department of Agriculture, Yearbook, 1923, page 536

<sup>17</sup> *Farm Tenancy in the United States, 1920*, Census Monographs IV, page 103

primarily a problem of economics to determine how rapidly a man should expect to climb the agricultural ladder and what assistance should be provided for him in the way of credit. Already a fairly complete source of technical information is available, through state and national agricultural extension agencies, farmers' short courses, and farm papers, to the enterprising young man who wants to learn the basic facts about farming. Moreover, the federal farm loan system and other plans of loaning money that embody the amortization principle, are a help after the person has acquired some capital and is able to buy a farm.

In thus emphasizing the importance of keeping the road to ownership open for the farm laborer, there is no intention to convey the impression that all farm laborers should be or can be farm owners. Some, no doubt, are not fitted by temperament or training to assume such responsibility and some will be prevented from doing so, due to misfortunes of various kinds. These persons usually become members of the second group of farm laborers—those who work for wages with no definite prospect of becoming farm tenants or owners. In general, they have a lower economic status than laborers who have an opportunity of becoming owners.

Several circumstances account for this fact. First of all, the wages a farm laborer receives are not high. Statistics in the *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture for 1933* show the average monthly wage of male farm laborers for the last ten years to be as follows: <sup>18</sup>

YEAR	WITH BOARD	WITHOUT BOARD
1923	\$33.09	\$46.74
1924	33.34	47.22
1925	33.38	47.80
1926	34.86	48.86
1927	34.58	48.63
1928	34.66	48.65
1929	34.74	49.08
1930	31.14	44.59
1931	23.60	35.03
1932	17.53	26.67

<sup>18</sup> *Yearbook*, United States Department of Agriculture, 1933, page 732

These amounts are lower than are the figures for many kinds of labor in cities, although it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that rent and food cost less in the country. But even so, the family that has no source of income, except what the breadwinner gets as a farm laborer, will do well if it meets adequately living expenses and provides some cultural advantages, such as education for the children. The average value of foodstuffs consumed during one year by 1,331 farm families of selected localities in Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and Ohio, in 1922-23, amounted to \$615 97.<sup>19</sup> Of this amount 33% was purchased. It is reasonable to believe that the average family of a farm laborer would not spend less than this amount, unless it accepted a lower standard of living than a farm tenant or owner family. An excessively large family, continued ill health involving proportionally high expenses for medical care, and unwise management on the part of the wife of the laborer, may easily bring the family to the verge of poverty. Moreover, work as a farm laborer offers little chance for vocational advancement, unless the laborer becomes a tenant or owner. There is no opportunity to become a foreman, manager, or superintendent, as might be true in an industrial or commercial establishment.

On the other hand, there are some obvious advantages in being a farm laborer. If the terms of employment extend over a period of one year or longer, there is no fear of unemployment and its consequences. Much of the work is out-of-doors and is healthful. Some farm laborers get satisfaction in watching crops and animals grow to maturity. They enjoy the freedom of the country and the contact with nature. But important as these advantages are, they are often not fully appreciated, or are offset by other advantages which the city environment offers.

*The Organization of Farm Laborers*—Up to the present time there has not been any extensive organization of farm laborers in the United States. Such a movement has developed, however, in certain European countries<sup>20</sup> Several reasons may be cited

<sup>19</sup> *Yearbook*, United States Department of Agriculture, 1927, pp 1154-1155

<sup>20</sup> For a description of them see, *The Representation and Organization of Agricultural Workers*, International Labor Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 8, part IV.



which explain, wholly or in part, the lack of labor organizations among rural laborers in this country. First, the fact that the personnel of the group changes is significant. A certain proportion of the laborers become tenants each year; and a certain number of those who do not hope to own farms either plan to engage in other kinds of work or tend to accept circumstances as they are without any thought of changing them through group effort or organization. Secondly, farm laborers are scattered. It is not possible for them to come together frequently, or to develop quickly a group consciousness. These circumstances inhibit the development of organizations. Thirdly, some persons who work as farm laborers may have interests that identify them to a certain extent with farm operators. This is especially likely to be the case with a man who expects to be a tenant or owner.

*Level of Living*—The level of living of laborers who do not expect to be farm owners is necessarily not high. Comparatively little investigation has been made to show in a detailed way the amount of goods and services these workers consume. It is reported in a fairly recent publication that the average value of goods used by 69 hired-men families was \$1,238, while the corresponding figure for 867 tenant families was \$1,357 and for 1,950 owner families, \$1,717.<sup>21</sup> The average size of family was almost the same in each of the three groups. It is probable that farm laborers' families are well supplied with food, though the diet may lack variety at certain seasons of the year. The dwelling is likely to be an extra house on the farm without modern conveniences, and the supply of furniture is quite limited as a rule. A survey of housing conditions on Maryland farms shows that the houses occupied by hired men were smaller than those occupied by either tenants or owners; and that, with the exception of colored tenants, the houses were judged to be in poorer condition than those occupied by any other group.<sup>22</sup> Often the

<sup>21</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, D Appleton-Century Co., 1929, page 70.

<sup>22</sup> Margaret Coffin, *Housing Conditions in Relation to Labor Turnover*, Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No 341

only means of transportation provided for the laborers' family is that furnished gratuitously by the employer. Contacts with neighboring families are not numerous. Telephones are seldom found in a farm laborer's home, and the supply of reading material is usually limited.

*Croppers*—The status of croppers is not unlike that of the farm laborer. In many respects it appears to be less desirable, for the income of the cropper is dependent upon the returns from the crops grown. If the crop fails, or the price is low, the cropper may be poorer at the end of the year than he was at the beginning. In the North Carolina study previously referred to, the annual cash income per family for white croppers is reported to be \$700 84 in the Coastal Plain region, \$264.74 in the Piedmont region and only \$155 89 in the Mountain region. Black croppers get less, for the average annual return for this group was \$640.59 in the Coastal Plain region and \$208 60 in the Piedmont region.<sup>23</sup> The people had little wealth or equity of any kind. The usual amount varied from three hundred to five hundred dollars. According to the United States Census data for 1930, the average value for all farm property for white croppers was \$2,212 per farm, and for colored croppers \$1,400. It is often necessary for croppers to use credit in order to meet living expenses.

Croppers have a low level of living. Houses are small. Usually the number of rooms per house is about three and one-half. Modern conveniences are absent. The education, health, cultural attainments and social contacts of these people are in keeping with their other living conditions. No other group of rural residents lives under such unsatisfactory conditions. The value of goods furnished by the farm and purchased for living by 129 white cropper families amounted to only \$947 in 1919, while the corresponding figure for 72 black cropper families was \$536.<sup>24</sup> A high level of living cannot be maintained with such small expenditures.

<sup>23</sup> C. C. Taylor and C. C. Zimmerman, *Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers*, Bulletin, North Carolina State College, Raleigh, 1923.

<sup>24</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, D. Appleton-Century Co., page 70.

*Seasonal Laborers*—This group consists of persons who are employed only part of the year. Some reference has been made to them already in connection with sources of farm labor and education. It was noted then that they were a varied lot, consisting for the most part of men who work for a short time and then move on when the rush season is over. A certain percentage of these laborers comes from the transient labor class that is ever present in our country. Some are the ordinary hobo type that frequents the city in winter and roams over the country during the spring and summer. Transient laborers occupy the lowest status farm laborers have. Due to necessity some of them may get board and lodging at the employer's home, but they are seldom received on terms of equality. Such workers may or may not be efficient as farm laborers. The farmer must take a chance when hiring them.

But it is unfair to condemn the casual laborer. These workers constitute a reserve labor supply for agriculture just as they do for industry. The plight of the farmer would be an unfortunate one if help could not be secured during the busy seasons. Until farming methods are changed so laborers can be employed regularly, this type of labor is an asset to agriculture, though the means of securing it and the quality of it may be improved.

The level of living of migratory workers, especially those workers with families, is extremely low. Ordinarily such families are in need of funds and seek employment in types of agriculture where the entire family may be employed. This kind of work involves cultivation of sugar-beets, onions, and truck gardening enterprises, as well as berry-picking and work in fruit orchards. Often these laborers live in the poorest kind of dwellings varying, so states the report of the President's Conference on Home Building, "from the veriest makeshifts—improvised habitations made up of boxes, burlap, brush or packing cases—to groups of substantial frame or adobe cottages of a type satisfactory from the standpoint of modern rural housing".<sup>25</sup> This report states further that crowded and unsanitary conditions

<sup>25</sup> *Farm and Village Housing*, Committee on Farm and Village Housing, President's Conference on Home Building and Ownership, 1932, pages 197-198.

often prevail where these workers live. These workers create numerous problems in the communities where they live, though the general attitude toward them has been one of indifference. Yet, as has just been stated, they are essential to certain types of agriculture. Perhaps the recommendations of the report of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership indicate more succinctly than anything else what needs to be done for the housing of this group of laborers, housing which vitally affects their standard of living. The report recommends, first in order, the licensing and supervision of camps by an authorized state department. Then follow specific statements about location, water supply, sewage disposal, et cetera. It is especially pertinent that, in the matter of housing, living quarters should be constructed with water-tight roofs and walls, and tight floors, if of wood, raised above the ground so as to allow free circulation of air. Additional requirements are suggested to insure a minimum amount of comfort and decency for the persons occupying these dwellings.<sup>26</sup>

*Child Laborers*—These workers fall into two classes: children of migratory families and children of families that have a permanent residence in the community. Migratory families come to the rural community in spring and leave again when the season's work is over. They are usually employed in types of farming that require a large amount of hand labor, such as truck growing, raising sugar-beets, and berry-picking. The entire family works in the fields. Low standards of living prevail among them. School attendance laws are evaded and the children are sometimes overworked. Studies made by the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor have furnished some reliable information about their condition. They substantiate the following facts: (1) many of these children work in the fields more than eight hours per day (a longer working day is not uncommon); (2) some of them are very young, a considerable number being under ten years of age; and (3) absence from school frequently occurs when the children are needed in the

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 208-209.

fields.<sup>27</sup> The welfare of children belonging to non-migratory families is also frequently sacrificed in order to get farm work done. Little distinction exists between working conditions of children who are hired and those who work on the home farm in the types of farming just mentioned. In areas where tobacco and cotton are grown the work of children is also utilized to a great extent. In other types of farming it is less extensive but frequently exists.<sup>28</sup>

It is a curious fact that the child labor laws in most of the states do not apply to work in agriculture. Social workers, school officials and others, therefore, face a difficult problem in bringing legal pressure to bear in limiting the abuses that are likely to occur. In the State of Wisconsin the Industrial Commission has been empowered to regulate the employment of children under sixteen years of age, in cherry orchards, market gardening, gardening conducted or controlled by canning companies, and in the culture of sugar-beets and cranberries.<sup>29</sup> Such a move is wholly desirable from the standpoint of social welfare. There is no more justification for child labor in agriculture than in any other industry. It is a pernicious evil. Children may do farm work as long as it does not interfere with their education or health. To this extent there can be no objection to it, and the Industrial Commission takes cognizance of this fact. Legislation similar to that in Wisconsin would be helpful in other states.

*Summary*—Problems of rural labor are complex. No single formula or plan is likely to be effective in their solution. The problems must be attacked from several angles and different measures of improvement worked out for the various groups of laborers concerned. The group made up of young men who aspire to be owners presents the least difficult problem of all. In fact, some persons may take the view that there is no problem in connection with this group, provided that, with reasonable

<sup>27</sup> See, *Children's Bureau*, Bureau Publications, No 132, 134, 151, 155, and 187

<sup>28</sup> *Children's Bureau*, Bureau Publication No 187

<sup>29</sup> Isabelle Strong Allen, *Children in Wisconsin Beet Fields*, Survey, March 15, 1929, page 802.

effort and foresight, they can accumulate enough wealth to become tenants and eventually owners. These persons are becoming owners.

Circumstances are different in the case of farm laborers who do not have the chance of becoming tenants or owners. Their position is less satisfactory, for low standards of living prevail. Improvement of their status involves, first, an increase of real wages, and second, more cultural advantages. There is not much likelihood, however, that the money wages of farm laborers will be increased to any great extent, unless the average farm enterprise becomes more remunerative than it is now or laborers become more efficient. Economic principles operate in the case of farm labor just as they do in any other phase of the farm business. It may be possible, though, to have a greater quantity of goods supplied by the farm when this is necessary, and certain other improvements in living conditions may be made with very little expense. For instance, the house and yard that the farm laborer's family uses may be improved.

Cultural and social advantages can be extended to farm laborers, and the laborers encouraged to use them. There is no fundamental reason why they cannot enjoy church services and social activities, just as their employer and his family enjoy them. If library facilities become more common in rural areas, farm laborers may have the advantage of good reading. County and community health programs make provision for laborers as well as for owners or tenants. Just now the farm laborer and his family have many of the disadvantages that all rural residents experience, only these are more conspicuous in the case of laborers. The improvement of living conditions for laborers, croppers and all farmers in fact, is in many respects a community problem. Wise and effective community organization is necessary in order to secure improvements in many phases of their standard of living.

The problems associated with seasonal laborers and transient families reach back into our industrial centers and involve questions of social policy affecting both rural and urban groups.

It is impossible to tell what changes will take place in the circumstances affecting these people. It has been suggested that public employment offices, reduced railroad rates and working men's hotels will help the casual laborer in his efforts to find work and to maintain his self-respect. Transient families, working on the farm during the summer only, present a different problem. Perhaps a strict enforcement of child labor and school attendance laws will be the first step in offsetting the major social problems they produce, namely, child labor and irregular school attendance. As matters stand now, these families are able to evade the attendance officers and the laws they try to enforce.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the sources from which farm laborers are drawn?
2. What are the general characteristics of farm laborers from the standpoint of: (a) age (b) nativity and race (c) education?
3. Describe the occupational status of farm laborers who have reasonable expectations of becoming farm owners.
4. Describe the level of living of farm laborers with families.
5. How does seasonal employment in agricultural enterprises affect the well-being of the migratory family?
6. In what respects do "croppers" resemble farm laborers?
7. What are the effects of child labor in agriculture on the well-being of the children involved?

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PART III

RURAL SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS



## CHAPTER X

### THE RURAL FAMILY

The principal purpose of this chapter is to consider the influences of the rural environment on the family. The importance of this social institution is well recognized. It leaves indelible marks on the character and personality of parent and child. Volumes could be written, as volumes have been written, about the significance of the family. The general facts of its importance have been considered in numerous publications and it is unnecessary to repeat them here in detail. It is sufficient to state that there is no substitute for family life in the formation of personality and character of both child and adult. Seemingly the great changes in modern life reduce the importance of the family, but in reality they change only its function. This is true in the country as well as in the city, though in rural areas families still perform more services and meet more needs of individuals than is ordinarily true of urban families. The great rôle of the family, it may be stated, in addition to assistance in providing physical necessities, is to act as an interpreting and integrating agency for the numerous and varied experiences which members of families have.

*Statistical Aspects of Rural Families*—In a preceding chapter dealing with population, reference was made to the fact that the marital rate for the rural farm and rural non-farm population shows some variation depending upon environmental circumstances. 57.9% of the male population in the rural farm group is married and 66% of the female population in this group is so classified. The latter figure is higher than it is for either the urban or rural non-farm group. On the other hand, the percentage for the males is lower than it is for the urban or rural non-farm population. These differences are due seemingly to the fact that there exists less opportunity for em-

ployment for unmarried women in the country than elsewhere, while in the case of males a considerable number who are unmarried can find employment on farms. So far as age of marriage is concerned, the data show a tendency for a slightly higher percentage of males in the rural non-farm population under thirty years of age to be married than in other groups, but beyond that period the percentage of males married in the rural farm population exceeds either the urban or the rural non-farm population in every age period. A similar statement is true also for females in the rural farm population.

In the previous chapter data were also presented to show that the median size of the rural farm family exceeded that of the urban family or the rural non-farm family. The exact figures were: rural farm, 4.00; rural non-farm, 3.30; and urban, 3.75. When the rural families were classified according to nativity and color, the data showed surprisingly little difference among native white, the families of foreign or mixed parentage, and negro families. It is well to bear in mind, however, when interpreting these figures, that a family is defined in the Census as "a group of persons, related either by blood or by marriage or adoption, who live together as one household, usually sharing the same table".<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the median is a certain type of average. It seems well therefore to present the data showing the number of families having designated number of persons in the rural and urban population. The figures are given in Table XVI.

These figures are interesting in as much as they show in a quantitative way how the size of urban and rural families differ. Families varying from 2 to 5 persons are more numerous in the urban population than in either the rural farm or rural non-farm population, but beyond this size the rural farm group exceeds the other two groups in every instance. It is, therefore, correct to state that the rural family is larger than the urban family; but it is unwise to assume that the rural farm family is exceptionally large. The percentages for families of more than 5 persons are too small to warrant such a conclusion.

<sup>1</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. VI, p. 5, Families.

TABLE XVI. PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES HAVING DESIGNATED NUMBER OF PERSONS IN THE URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION \*

FAMILIES COMPRISING	RURAL FARM	RURAL NON-FARM	URBAN	ALL FAMILIES
1 person	5.3	9.3	8.0	7.9
2 persons	18.3	23.9	25.1	23.4
3 persons	18.0	21.1	22.1	20.8
4 persons	16.6	17.5	18.1	17.5
5 persons	13.3	11.7	11.6	12.0
6 persons	10.0	7.3	6.8	7.6
7 persons	7.1	4.3	3.8	4.7
8 persons	4.8	2.4	2.1	2.8
9 persons	3.1	1.3	1.1	1.6
10 persons	1.8	0.7	0.6	0.9
11 persons	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.5
12 or more persons	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.4

\* Source, *Fifteenth Census*, Families

TABLE XVII. PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES HAVING DESIGNATED NUMBER OF PERSONS IN THE RURAL FARM POPULATION CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO COLOR AND NATIVITY \*

FAMILIES COMPRISING	NATIVE WHITE			NEGRO	OTHER RACES
	Native Parentage	Foreign or Mixed Parentage	Foreign- Born White		
1 person	4.2	6.4	9.0	6.1	6.9
2 persons	18.2	17.7	17.0	20.0	13.1
3 persons	18.6	18.6	15.8	16.5	13.7
4 persons	17.3	18.2	15.4	13.5	13.7
5 persons	13.8	14.0	12.9	11.1	13.1
6 persons	10.2	9.8	10.0	9.1	11.7
7 persons	7.1	6.3	7.2	7.3	9.3
8 persons	4.7	4.0	5.0	5.7	7.0
9 persons	2.9	2.4	3.2	4.2	4.9
10 persons	1.6	1.4	2.1	2.9	3.1
11 persons	0.8	0.7	1.2	1.7	1.7
12 persons	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.8	1.9

\* Source, *Fifteenth Census*, Families.

It is of interest to inquire next if there is a tendency for families in any particular color or nativity group to be large, or whether the large families are fairly evenly distributed in all groups. The data in Table XVII provide an answer to this question in so far as it is available in the census.

It appears from these figures that among the white population comparatively little difference exists, though there is a tendency for families of 7, 8 and 9 persons to occur most frequently among the foreign born. The percentages for the negroes compare favorably with the white group with the exception that this group exceeds even the foreign-born white when families of more than 6 persons are considered.

Another indication of the size of family is the number of children in it.<sup>2</sup> The Census Bureau has made this information generally available for the first time in the Fifteenth Census. The figures for this point are presented in Table XVIII both

TABLE XVIII. PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES HAVING DESIGNATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN CLASSIFIED IN URBAN AND RURAL GROUPS.\*

Families Having		Rural Farm	Rural Non-Farm	Urban
No children	under 10	50.7	57.4	62.4
1 child	under 10	19.1	18.8	19.4
2 children	under 10	13.7	12.3	10.9
3 children	under 10	8.8	6.7	4.6
4 children	under 10	5.0	3.3	1.9
5 children	under 10	2.0	1.2	0.6
6 or more	under 10	0.7	0.3	0.2
No children	under 21	30.3	39.7	41.7
1 child	under 21	18.1	20.0	22.1
2 children	under 21	15.8	15.7	16.5
3 children	under 21	12.0	10.2	9.3
4 children	under 21	8.7	6.3	5.0
5 children	under 21	6.0	3.8	2.7
6 to 8	under 21	7.9	4.0	2.5
9 or more	under 21	1.1	0.4	0.2

\* Source, *Fifteenth Census*, Families

<sup>2</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. VI, page 14, Families.

for families having children under 10 years and under 21 years of age.

It is clear from this table that children occupy an important place in families in both the urban and rural population, as approximately 70% of the rural farm families and 60% of the rural non-farm and urban families have one or more children under 21 years of age. So far as size is concerned, it is evident that the rural farm population leads the other groups in all instances where families with three or more children are considered. The differences are especially marked when families of 5 or more children under 21 years of age are considered.<sup>3</sup>

*The Environment of the Rural Family*—The family is essential in the operation of the farm. No other type of industry appears to be interwoven so closely with family life. Indeed, sometimes farming is alluded to, not as an industry at all, but as a mode of life. The dwelling is located on the farm close to barns and sheds where feed and stock are kept. The house itself may be pressed into service from time to time in connection with the farming enterprise. Seed corn is hung in the attic to dry. Fruits and vegetables are stored in the cellar. Sometimes a cream separator is put in the house, and the telephone which answers a business as well as a social need is located in the living room or kitchen. Hired help often get board and lodging at the farm. The children, and frequently the mother, assist in whatever way they can with farm work. Moreover, an important part of the living of the family comes directly from the farm. If a due amount of effort and forethought is used, vegetables, fruit, milk and poultry products can be had. Truly, family life is inseparable from the farming enterprise.

The comparative isolation of the rural family is a second environmental circumstance that deserves mention. Social and occupational activities do not attract its members away from home as frequently as they do in the city. Parents and children are in constant association with one another, except during the time the children are in school. Men are at home for breakfast, dinner and supper. The whole family occasionally engages in

<sup>3</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol VI, pages 19-22, Families

certain tasks about the farm, and there is opportunity for conversation at mealtime and in the evening. The farm family is by necessity a closely knit group.

This close relationship with the farming industry encourages co-operation and mutual aid among members of the family. Children learn early the virtue of work and are taught to perform various tasks on the farm. They may develop a deep interest in farming and receive a certain amount of experience that is distinctly of educational value. In so far as children learn the virtue of work and establish habits of industry and thrift, farm work is advantageous for them. The danger lies in carrying the practice to extremes. Many kinds of work on the farm may be done in a satisfactory manner by children, especially if it involves routine hand labor. However, children's work on farms is not always confined to tasks of this kind.

While it is true that the tasks can be adjusted to the age and strength of the child, there is no assurance that this adjustment is always made. The usual test applied is, "Can the child do the work?" If so, no further questions are asked. Parents often forget or do not realize the fact that overwork during childhood may possibly contribute to ill health later in life. There is need for research studies that will show what tasks on a farm a child at a given age may do with safety. Work which seems easy becomes monotonous and tiresome if repeated too often. It is a wise parent who knows how much work to require of a child.

The schooling of the child is involved as well as his health. Enough studies have been made to show the serious results which follow if children are kept out of school repeatedly to assist with farm work. They become retarded, lose interest, and many times, if the law can be complied with or evaded, quit attending entirely. The parent profits from the child's work, but he is robbing the youngster of an education at a time in the child's life when it can be obtained most easily. Many adults, who have been deprived of schooling in order to help with farm work, would gladly exchange now whatever benefits they or their parents may have gained by their absence from school for the advantages of an education. Perhaps most of



the parents would be willing to make the exchange for them also, if they could do it.

The relationship is so close in other ways that the welfare of the family is often sacrificed for the benefit of the farm. Expenditures for health, dental work, education, etc., are curtailed to pay taxes and mortgages or to make investments. Under certain circumstances such expenditures are probably permissible, but frequently they become the common practice. Hence, physical defects of farm children that could be corrected are neglected. Improvements in the home are postponed one year after another. Expenditures for school and church are held to a meager amount, while the farm is improved or more land is purchased. Sometimes it seems as if the family exists for the sake of the farm rather than the farm for the family. Studies of rural living are helping to point out in a quantitative way the relationships existing between farm income and living standards. They have already established the fact that a high income alone does not insure a high standard of living. The income only provides the means for it.

The isolation and resulting close association of members of the farm family may be disadvantageous as well as advantageous. Whether this circumstance actually promotes harmony and good will, or not, depends upon the personalities of the various members of the family. Sometimes the apparent mutuality and good will is nothing but submission to the autocratic rule of a parent who controls the situation. It is only when persons have characters and personalities that will "wear" under the strain of close association that the seclusion of the farm family may be advantageous. A person with a bad disposition can blast every chance of a happy, wholesome home life; and the more isolated the family is, the worse the condition becomes. Family life on the farm, just as family life anywhere, depends very largely upon the rôle the different members play.

*The Rôle of the Mother*—The farm woman is both housekeeper and home-maker. The quality of the family life depends largely, although not entirely, upon her. Outstanding qualities of many families may be traced to the fact that the mother is

or was a remarkable person. Very likely she worked for ideals and cultural advancement, when it seemed as if the weight of custom and tradition plus narrowness and selfishness would surely defeat her; but she lived in her hopes, clung to her ideals and finally succeeded. Too often, perhaps, the novelist and critic of farm life have overlooked these qualities of the farm woman. She is not blind to the defects of her environment, but she has enough courage and mental poise to see beyond them the fundamental and worth-while values in life. Expressions by farm women such as, "If you wish to learn breadth and strength and vision, live on a farm," "country life offers the widest field for the grace of service," and "to the devout heart Divinity seems closer in the country," portray an element in life that is as vital as it is noble.<sup>4</sup>

Not all farm mothers succeed in being good home-makers, however. Certain circumstances prevent their success in this respect. The principal ones may be enumerated as follows: (1) there is too much work to do; (2) the woman may not have sufficient training and education to perform her rôle successfully; (3) the husband may not co-operate; (4) negative community influences may offset the efforts of the mother.

The fact that the farm woman leads a busy life is well known. There is much work to do on the average farm. Washing, ironing, baking, cooking, in addition to other tasks, take much time and effort. Moreover, a large amount of the housework must be done without modern conveniences. Some women also engage in tasks outside the house. It was found in the study of approximately 9,000 records secured in a survey made by the United States Department of Agriculture that 25% of the women helped with the livestock, 24% helped in the fields, 56% cared for gardens and 36% helped with the milking.<sup>5</sup> These women worked on an average of 13.1 hours in the summer

<sup>4</sup> These and other similar statements appear in a pamphlet entitled *Do You Want Your Daughter to Marry a Farmer?* Webb Publishing Co., St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>5</sup> *The Farm Woman's Problems*, United States Department of Agriculture, Circular 148.

and 10.5 hours in the winter; only 13% had vacations averaging 11.5 days.

A more recent study of the use of time by 288 farm home-makers shows that the average work period was 63.7 hours per week. Approximately four-fifths of this was spent in home-making and the remainder was spent in farm work. The farm home-maker worked longer than the non-farm home-maker mainly because she did farm work in addition to household duties.<sup>6</sup> In South Dakota the average weekly length of hours worked by 100 farm women was 66 hours and 10 minutes. The average amount of time devoted to home-making amounted to 54 hours and 13 minutes.<sup>7</sup> In these studies as in others of this kind,<sup>8</sup> the influence of the size of the family and ages of the children as well as the use of modern conveniences are important in determining the amount of time spent in performing the work activities. Labor-saving devices are important and either reduce the work period or enable the woman to do more work. It is possible that some women underestimate the importance of modern conveniences and are inclined to use inferior equipment and inefficient methods partly because they have developed the habit of doing their work in a certain way. In regard to age of children the study in Oregon shows that the time given to the care of a child under one year of age was three times that given to a child between one and six, and twelve times that given to a child of high school age.<sup>9</sup> Increase in size of family demanded more work on the part of the home-maker, particularly in the preparation of food. In the State of Washington the home-maker with children worked about 5 hours more per week than one without children.<sup>10</sup> These

<sup>6</sup> Maud Wilson, *Use of Time by Oregon Farm Homemakers*, Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 256.

<sup>7</sup> Grace E. Wasson, *Use of Time by South Dakota Farm Homemakers*, South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 247.

<sup>8</sup> See Margaret Whittemore and Bernice Neil, *Time Factors in the Business of Homemaking in Rural Rhode Island*, Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 221

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Inez F. Arnquist and Evelyn H. Roberts, *The Present Use of Work Time of Farm Home Makers*, Washington Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 234

statements are based on averages and perhaps do not disclose significant aspects of child care so far as the time of the housewife is concerned for children at different ages, yet they do give some objective evidence that care of children is an important variable.

It is evident that farm women are busy. Some of them work too hard and the effects of it are noticeable in broken health and a narrow view of life. Household duties and farm work become so burdensome that there is little time or energy left for home-making. Reading, music, story-telling and other forms of recreation which mean much to the development of family life have to be omitted. Under such circumstances the ideals of the family are likely to disintegrate.

Nevertheless, some farm women do succeed in both housekeeping and home-making. Their children grow up to be fine men and women, and the mother preserves a mental poise and attitude toward life that is wholly noteworthy. Her ability to achieve success in such endeavors is difficult to measure or even to describe very well. It is partially evident in the way the household is managed and the children trained. Good health on the part of the mother, native ability, education, co-operation of the husband, and household conveniences are important assets. Yet, with all of these advantages some women are unable to secure satisfactory results.

*Insufficient Training and Education*—It has been suggested already that some farm women lack adequate training for their tasks. The extent to which this is true cannot be determined accurately, but improved methods are needed in home-making and housekeeping just as they are in farming. This fact is being recognized. Several periodicals now devote space to home management and home improvement problems. Instruction in home economics given in high schools, and extension work under the auspices of the United States Department of Agriculture and the extension division of agricultural colleges, is of great value in the dissemination of facts about housekeeping and home management. This information helps the farm woman to perform her rôle as a housekeeper. She is still in need of information

which will help her in the responsibility as a home-maker. She needs facts about child training and child nutrition, for some women may be good housekeepers but poor mothers. House-keeping is the initial step in home-making. Ability to manage the house needs to be accompanied by ability to make a home. Unless the woman has information that will help her in the latter activity, she must necessarily follow customary and traditional methods. These may be as unsuited for her present problems as are the antiquated housekeeping methods of her grandmother.

The rôle of the farm woman is not only great but distinctive. It is a work of art and a life of devotion. To pass judgment upon the activities of farm women without taking these facts into consideration is to fail in understanding them or their work. The typical farm woman is interested in material goods—houses, land, schools and churches—largely because these are related to the home-making function. "Choose, the woman must—to be happy in helping create children, or to be happy in creating things. The genius of the farm is in its relation to life; the genius of the city is its relation to things. The farm breathes of nature; the city sticks out with art. The farm woman is a nature woman, the city woman an art woman. Each has her place and function; but the farm woman resists being made into a city woman, and well she may, for her part already is a noble one, mother of the nation".<sup>11</sup> It is likely that most farm women either consciously or unconsciously have made their choice.

*Co-operation of the Husband*—Lack of co-operation of the husband was listed as another reason why the farm woman sometimes does not succeed in performing her rôle as a home-maker. His failure to co-operate may be entirely unintentional, but it is no less harmful. The farm family tends to be patriarchal in type. According to custom and tradition, the husband has authority over family expenditures and the policy to be pursued regarding the children. One farm woman succinctly described

<sup>11</sup> C. J. Galpin, *My Philosophy of Rural Life*, Bulletin of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Vol. XXIV, No. 8, 1931

such situations when she said, "it is true we have one purse but he (meaning her husband) holds it."

The husband's time and efforts are taken up with duties on the farm and he frequently fails to discern the needs of the home and children. The mother, therefore, must interpret their needs and problems to him as best she can. If she fails to do this, her ideals in home-making may never be realized, and conflict between husband and wife may arise. The following instance is typical. The wife and mother in family "A" is discouraged. The husband does not want to send the daughter to high school, and the mother is obliged to put forth extra effort to get the money for this purpose, although the family owns the farm they are operating. In another family the mother works in the fields so the son may attend high school, which the father opposes. In some families a sort of clandestine alliance grows up between mother and children. They submit to the demands of the father, but with the understanding that the children leave when they are old enough. So, one by one, the children slip away from the father's régime, and from the farm. Recently new influences have modified the status of the husband and father, and a co-operative instead of a patriarchal type of control is emerging.

It is especially important that the father assist the mother in problems of child training. He can do much to teach the children, particularly the boys, the vocation of farming. Some fathers do not do this. Instead of co-operating with the youngsters to the extent of giving them a chance to try their hand at farming, the father frowns upon any innovations of this kind. Many boys have become dissatisfied with farm life and have left home because the father would not let them have a share in some livestock or crops, or because he insisted that the farming should be done his way. Perhaps, as a new type of family control based upon mutual understanding and respect becomes more common, these mistakes of the father will occur less frequently. In fact, they have disappeared already in many instances, and partnership agreements exist between father and son. A wise father knows the best policy he can pursue is to have

confidence in his child, and to encourage him in taking responsibility. Otherwise, the boy may never gain the experience in self-direction necessary for adult life.

*Community Influences*—Community influences often affect the quality of family life. It is not possible to keep children at home all the time. Sooner or later they will participate in community affairs. A community with low moral standards may do much to offset a good home environment. In fact, it is an open question whether standards established in the home can long remain unmodified by community standards. In a study of rural organizations and the farm family in Wisconsin, the educational, cultural and recreational activities of families seemed to depend much more upon cultural traditions in the district—one which had grown out of early settlement—such as nationality backgrounds and neighborhood or community groupings, than upon size of family, size of farm, distance from trade center or length of residence of a particular farm family.<sup>12</sup> Also a study of social participation of farm families in Missouri indicates that the average person spends 691.5 hours per year in group contacts outside his or her immediate family. Unorganized contacts, sometimes called informal contacts, accounted for 90.5% of the total. Most of these unorganized contacts were provided through visiting, dinners, and trading. The organized contacts were provided in a large measure through attendance at church and Sunday School.<sup>13</sup>

Parents must be interested in community affairs in order to protect or develop standards maintained in the home. Churches, schools, recreation and associates all play a part in determining the character and behavior of growing children. The homemaker is obliged to seek the co-operation of other parents in the neighborhood and community, for only in this way can wholesome contacts outside the home be provided. One family cannot

<sup>12</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, J. H. Kolb, Creagh Inge, and A. F. Wileden, *Rural Organizations and the Farm Family*, Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 96

<sup>13</sup> Randall C. Hill, E. L. Morgan, Mabel V. Campbell and O. R. Johnson, *Social Economic and Homemaking Factors in Farm Living*, Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 148.

make a progressive school or church. Such a task involves the co-operation of many families.

A significant change affecting the farm family is the diminishing importance of rural neighborhood groups. These groups admirably supplemented the family in furnishing a means of social intercourse and wholesome recreation in pioneer times. The old-fashioned spelling bees, singing schools and husking bees, once so common and popular, have passed into history in most areas. Now many social contacts outside the family circle are secured in the larger community where personal influence and neighborly interest are not so great. The radius of contact for the farm family has been extended greatly with the use of the automobile. Commercialized amusements now compete for a share of the time people spend in recreation. This change has increased family responsibility, for somehow the children must be taught to evaluate and interpret all these contacts.

The development of activities by institutions that come in close contact with farm families influences their well-being. The school, especially, has sought the co-operation of the home in many ways. Home project work, for example, is based on the assumption that the child will have the co-operation of his parents in carrying out his project. Boys' and girls' club work is not possible unless parents give the child permission to engage in it. Many churches include week-day activities in their programs and are taking various members of the family away from home more frequently. Recently Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls have been organized in some rural communities. Then public meetings of various kinds have increased in number. All of these activities necessitate certain adjustments on the part of the family. If a family fails to make a co-operative adjustment, social chaos is likely to result.

The development of activities and interests away from home do not portend a conflict between the family and community institutions or organizations. Rather, they indicate that the community must develop and conserve certain social values which are fostered in the home. The ideals of the family and of the community are being interwoven in order to create a suitable



social environment for adults and children. Community activities are not well co-ordinated, however, and there is danger in some places that programs outside the home will demand an undue amount of time and attention. When this occurs, organizations and institutions are likely to defeat their own purpose, for the family is admittedly a basic institution. If there is not sufficient time for the cultivation of family life, its influence and ideals diminish in importance.

*Weaknesses of the Rural Family*—The rural family as well as the urban family has certain shortcomings and weaknesses. It fails to instruct children in sex education in a satisfactory manner. Many children approach the period of adolescence with only a smattering of knowledge necessary to guide them safely through this period. Instruction in sex matters is distinctly a parental duty and obligation.

Rural families, like many urban families, are not sufficiently aware of the health needs of their children. Any public health nurse can relate dozens of instances where the child's health is being jeopardized because the parent will not seek medical advice. Neglect in these matters most frequently happens in connection with physical ailments that are not acute, though serious. Eye defects, defective tonsils, and orthopedic troubles are common examples of physical ailments that are often neglected. Conservatism, ignorance, lack of ready cash and sheer inertia are the chief reasons for such neglect.

It frequently happens that the child's interest along educational and cultural lines is neglected. There is little opportunity or encouragement for a rural child to get special training in the various forms of art while he is still at home on the farm. It is a significant fact that young artists rarely develop their talent in the country. They are obliged to go to the city for such training.

The rural family does not always provide adequate recreational facilities for the children. It is true that the child has opportunity to play in the open spaces, and he may have numerous pets and toys; but the companionship of other children which every child seeks and needs is often lacking. Parents are

often not cognizant of this desire for companionship on the part of the child and are sometimes unduly critical of the child's longing for friends of approximately the same age. Of course some of these criticisms may be levelled against the urban family also.

*Types of Farm Families*—It is readily apparent to anyone acquainted with rural life that farm families differ in many ways. In order to classify them in a scientific manner a great deal of research and accumulation of data about family behavior is necessary. This information is not at hand, for rural families have not been studied in enough detail to make such a classification possible. In the absence of this information pragmatic classifications must suffice. Such a one is presented in the following paragraphs. The interest which families manifest in cultural values furnishes a basis for what seems to be a fairly complete and helpful classification. From this standpoint, the following types of families are suggested.

*The Successful Family*—Families of this type are found in varying numbers in all parts of the United States. They are considered successful because they possess interests which are desirable from the standpoint of social welfare and national progress. Rural statesmen and national leaders point to families of this type with pride. They are co-operative, democratic, thrifty, religious and learned. Children are sent to high school and college. Interest in community affairs is highly developed and constructive. Probably families of this type have furnished a goodly number of statesmen and leaders in industry, art, science and theology for generations. Future research studies may explain why these families exist and maintain their idealism, while other families living near them do not achieve so much. Some characteristics of these families may be listed.

- (1) They have a deep appreciation of farm life.
- (2) They use up-to-date methods in farming.
- (3) They are industrious, but use the money they receive as a means to secure satisfactory living and cultural advantages.
- (4) Religious interests are expressed and developed in a constructive manner.

- (5) They have a deep interest in education.
- (6) Their children enjoy farm life.

Several years ago a study was made of what were considered to be successful farm families in Colorado.<sup>14</sup> On the basis of this study, which involved the questionnaire-interview method in addition to general observation by the research worker, the following characteristics were among those mentioned. (1) most of the parents in these families were farmers' children; (2) these families had to struggle hard to attain success in farming and to maintain their position; (3) an appreciable number of the farmers retire on the farm; (4) these families were leaders in community enterprises; (5) the church plays an important part in their life; (6) they demand good schools; and (7) they consider recreation almost as necessary as food and education.

*The Materialistic Family*—The materialistic type represents farm families that make the accumulation of wealth the primary object of their endeavors. These families may or may not be democratic, co-operative, or religious. As a rule, they are not especially interested in education or community affairs. Questions of social importance are viewed in their pecuniary significance. Families of this type may be quite wealthy, but are often unable to use wealth effectively. Unwise investments are frequently made. Such families participate in community affairs to some extent, but usually they are not leaders in activities of a non-economic character. Cultural values compete unsuccessfully with material possessions. Children frequently dislike the farm. These families are unsuccessful, because wealth is not used freely enough to foster cultural values.

*The Under-privileged Family*—This type includes families that, owing to mismanagement, illness or other misfortune, are barely able to make a living. They are usually democratic and co-operative. Cultural values may be appreciated, but the problem of supplying material needs is so urgent that satisfaction in education, religion, and art have to be held in abeyance and

<sup>14</sup> B. F. Coen, *Successful Farm Families of Colorado*, Colorado Agricultural College, Bulletin Series, 26, No. 3

may never be realized. Children may not dislike farm life, but parents can give them little encouragement or financial assistance. Such families are unsuccessful because of an absence of opportunity to acquire and enjoy cultural values.

*The Isolated Family*—Families that voluntarily isolate themselves from neighbors and community contacts constitute another type. Such families are well-to-do, and usually secure a considerable amount of wealth by inheritance. They are frequently considered to be peculiar by their neighbors because they do not participate in neighborhood affairs. If families of this type have intimate contacts with other persons it is likely to be with relatives or people who live outside the community. Interest in accumulation of wealth is usually pronounced, but interest in cultural values varies. These families are often childless. Lack of wholesome contacts on a neighborhood and community basis prevents families of this type from being successful as defined in connection with the first group considered.

Following is a brief description of an isolated family. Crowding almost into the highway near a little rural town is a large, square framed, unpainted house. One could not say it faced the road because there are no windows on that side of the house. On the other sides there are a few ill-proportioned windows that at night give forth a gloomy light from a kerosene lamp. One thing that relieves the homely structure is a long narrow front step which is usually lined with cream cans. In front there is a vegetable garden that stays just as it is planted in the spring until snow comes in the fall. There is a large orchard which is not cared for. Pruning, so this farmer thinks, is just another thing that those know-nothing county agents get paid for telling farmers to do. There are two children in the family, a boy and a girl. They seldom see anyone outside the family. The boy feeds the stock, hauls hay, and does other farm work. The girl manages the house as well as she can with the meager amount of equipment.

The family is extremely non-social. The principal source of social contacts disappeared when the mother died about five years ago. The father goes to town once a week, usually on

Saturday night, to buy groceries and other supplies. There appear to be no other contacts with the community. The family never enjoys any amusements or recreation. The premises and farm practices show no appreciation of farm life and little understanding of scientific agriculture. But the family is not under-privileged, as the members have fair health and have had no special misfortune. Their great handicap is lack of contacts.

*Stability of the Rural Family*—The foregoing discussions suggest that, regardless of whatever defects or limitations rural families may have, they are comparatively stable. There are various evidences of this stability. It is generally recognized that divorce and desertion occur less frequently in the country than in the city and that the rate of increase of divorce in recent decades has been much greater in the cities than in rural areas. Another evidence of stability is the fact that in numerous instances several generations of a family will operate a single farm. An extreme example of this phenomenon is reported by Russell Lord in his book, *Men of Earth*. He states that a certain family in France has held title to a farm since the year 772!<sup>15</sup> Of course, such illustrious records do not exist in the United States, but the ownership of a farm for three generations by members of one family is not uncommon. Such families often become the leaders in their neighborhoods or communities. In fact, rural neighborhoods frequently derive their names from families of this type.

The causes of this stability necessarily exist in the rural environment. Farming either as a mode of life or as a business enterprise is especially favorable to family stability. It affords all the members of the family an opportunity to participate in work activities according to their ability. In this they necessarily are closely associated with one another. Unless unusual circumstances prevail, the farm provides a certain degree of security by virtue of the fact that it supplies some necessities of life which are unavailable to families dependent upon employment in industrial enterprises for their livelihood. The period of residence on one farm usually covers a number of years. The disorganizing effects

<sup>15</sup> Russell Lord, *Men of Earth*, Longmans, Green & Co., 1932, page 3.

of extreme mobility are therefore less frequent in the country. Then, too, custom and tradition contribute to the stability of family life. For example, innovations in marital relationships are held in disfavor by most members of the various neighborhood or community groups. These, in turn, exert a certain social control over the behavior of all the individuals in the group. Certainly, it is only the exceptional person who can face the condemnation he will likely receive if the standards of family life are endangered.

Moreover, there are no indications that rural family life will become unstable in the future. It is true that rural homes are becoming modernized in numerous ways and the physical activities of homemaking in the country are accordingly becoming less numerous and strenuous. But instead of diminishing the stability of family life, modern conveniences provide opportunity for a richer and more varied development of it. While these conveniences make it possible to become cognizant of new and different ways of living, there is no indication that they will be accepted. Nor are modern means of communication and transportation affecting the stability of the rural family to any appreciable extent.

*The Family Dwelling Place*—It is quite probable, too, that the dwelling place of the rural family, especially if it be a farm home, contributes in a subtle manner to the stability of family life. Frequently, in discussions about the rural home so much attention is centered on the absence of modern conveniences that the positive aspects are overlooked. Yet there are important advantages. One of these is ample space. Ordinarily, family life develops best when it has a degree of privacy beyond that afforded by the average city dwelling. Where living conditions are crowded, family life must either stand the strain of close quarters or disintegrate. In the rural environment, families enjoy plenty of space. Children, especially, benefit by the opportunity for freedom of movement. Certain important health advantages logically follow. At least, fresh air and sunshine are available to all.

The rural home is close to nature. This is a stabilizing influence, favorable to family life, particularly if an appreciation for nature has been cultivated. It is possible to have a yard, a garden and flowers. These provide opportunity for creative activities and co-operative endeavors on the part of the family.

Finally, too, unless there is extreme isolation, the rural family has the advantage of neighbors. Rural people know one another, and while members of one family may not approve entirely of a neighbor, complete avoidance of the neighbor's family is difficult. Necessarily, rural families must develop toleration and understanding in order to get along harmoniously. On the positive side of neighboring is the sharing of pleasure and sorrows. A successful farm family in a good neighborhood is a combination that fosters social progress and security.

Rural young people may not agree with their elders on numerous matters relating to family life but they do not question the basic importance of family life as it exists in the country.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the median size of the rural family?
2. Is there a marked difference in the number of children in rural families when classified according to color and nativity?
3. List the aspects of the rural environment which especially influence family life
4. What circumstance may prevent the farm woman from being a successful homemaker?
5. To what extent do children increase the period of work for the farm woman?
6. What circumstances sometimes account for the failure of the husband to co-operate with the wife in the care and training of the children?
7. Why are community institutions important in the development of family life?
8. Enumerate the principal weaknesses of the rural family.
9. List the characteristics of a successful farm family.
10. What are the characteristics of a materialistic farm family.

11. What circumstances produce an isolated family? An underprivileged family?
12. List the influences which contribute to the stability of the rural family.

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE RURAL CHURCH

What has been said about the importance of the family can be applied with almost equal emphasis to the church. It is one of our oldest institutions and meets a vital need in the lives of people everywhere. While the church and religion are not identical, churches are indispensable to the orderly and effective expression of religious interest. Religion and church are not ordinarily separated in thought to a very great extent. It is the task of the rural church to interpret religion, that is the Christian religion in this country, in terms of the people's experiences and fundamental desires. This task is paramount to all others; and if it is done properly, many problems confronting rural churches will disappear. The rural environment is conducive to the development of religious interest. Close contact with nature, a well-developed family life, as well as custom and tradition, conspire to make religion play an important part in the lives of rural people.

In pioneer times churches were built almost as soon as farm-houses. People went to church regularly, heard the interpretation of religion that fitted the circumstances of their lives, and were satisfied. The church was doing its sacred work. But times change. A rapid survey of rural life would show that many characteristics it had in pioneer days have passed away. Neighborhood units are disappearing, schools are being consolidated, and scientific methods are being applied to farming. Numerous activities now compete for the time and attention of rural people.

Owing to the weight of tradition and lack of progressive leadership, many rural churches have not kept pace with these changes. They have clung tenaciously to old methods and therefore have interpreted the principles of Christianity as they

did two or three generations ago. But such religious services do not create much interest or enthusiasm in a thoroughly up-to-date farmer. He wants an interpretation of religion that is as up-to-date as his farming. In other words, the farmer wants to know how the principles of Christianity can be expressed at the present time. How can he participate in a modern, virile Christian program for his community and state? A failure to receive an answer to this and similar questions has caused many people to lose interest in the church, although the values embodied in religion are just as fundamental and far-reaching today as they ever were. Confusion arises because they are not related to the daily experiences of country folks. This fact, plus the existence of an excessive number of churches in some communities, inadequate buildings, and poorly trained ministers, has given rise to what is called the rural church problem. Some phases of this problem are presented in the following paragraphs.

*Over-churching*—A precise definition of over-churching is not available. The church deals with the subjective as well as the objective aspects of life, and many of its influences are immeasurable. Yet, it is logical to believe that a small church with a handful of members and supporters cannot accomplish as much as one with enough people to create an effective organization. Morse and Brunner in their study of churches in 179 rural counties set 1,000 people per church as the norm. It appears, however, that many counties had from two to four times as many churches as this norm would necessitate.<sup>1</sup>

More recently there is evidence of a decline in the number of churches in rural areas; for a tabulation of the number of Protestant churches per 1,000 rural population shows that in 1920 the ratio was 2.4 churches per 1,000 people, whereas in 1930 the corresponding figure was 1.9.<sup>2</sup> No one who is at all familiar with rural church conditions will doubt the fact that over-

<sup>1</sup> H. N. Morse and E. de S. Brunner, *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, George H. Doran Company, page 73.

<sup>2</sup> Edmund de S. Brunner and J. H. Kolb, *Rural Social Trends*, McGraw-Hill Co., 1933, page 227.

churching exists in some rural districts, although there might be some question regarding the extent of it. The results of over-churching are obvious. Where it is found, adequate personnel for the various tasks cannot be secured, and persons who are willing to assume responsibility will have more work than they can do. There is also difficulty in securing enough funds, and a general lack of enthusiasm prevails.

It would be unfair, however, to conclude that an excess number of churches in a community is entirely due to the mismanagement of the people. During pioneer days the neighborhood was the prevalent unit in rural life. Each neighborhood was apt to have its church just as it had a school. The territory included in a neighborhood was not large, so many churches were built in the open country where these units of population were found. In recent years neighborhoods have lost much of their vitality or have disappeared entirely, because the interests of the people are being merged with larger communities. The church usually remains as the last vestige of the neighborhood. The village, town or small city is becoming the center for many social activities. In exceptional cases the neighborhood or open country church may continue to be active, particularly if it is located far enough in the country to escape the influence of competing village churches, or when it is located near a fairly large town or city. In the first instance it will be approximately five to ten miles from any town and probably will be the center for some other social activities of the people in the territory around it. In the second instance its existence is possible, not because competing churches are absent, but because the farm people prefer a rural church where they feel at home rather than one where urban influences predominate.

Whether or not the disappearance of the country church indicates a religious decadence among rural people depends upon the connection which they establish with village churches. If rural people go to the village where there is a stronger organization, a more capable minister, as well as a wider range of contacts, no one would doubt the advisability of the change. Fortu-

nately, this appears to be happening in a large number of cases.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, if people fail to unite with a church in town, the disappearance of the country church would constitute a loss to rural life. Whether or not rural people unite with village churches seems to depend to a considerable extent upon the efforts church leaders in towns make to interest them. Unfortunately, it is not certain that village churches perform their duty in this respect in a successful manner. Investigations made by the Institute of Social and Religious Research show that the membership of country people in churches is proportionately less than it is for town residents.<sup>4</sup> It is pointed out in a study of the distribution of church membership and attendance between the town and country in Pickaway County, Ohio, for the year 1925, that a total of twenty churches having 4,982 members secured only 24.9% of them from the country, and of 3,710 members in Sunday Schools, 27.5% were farmers. Country people constituted only 18.3% of the membership of young people's societies.<sup>5</sup> Similar results are reported by the Institute of Social and Religious Research.<sup>6</sup> Similar results were obtained in a detailed study of church activities in ten town-country communities in Michigan. The data for this study showed that 38.7% of the town population was included in the membership of the churches, whereas only 14.4% of the country population had this distinction. Also, when the attendance at both special and regularly scheduled meetings was considered the data showed that 68% of the total accumulated attendance was represented by town residents and the remainder, 32%, by country dwellers. These percentages were found in spite of the fact that the country population of these communities amounted to 58% of the total population.<sup>7</sup> Up to the present

<sup>3</sup> Edmund de S. Brunner and J. H. Kolb, *Rural Social Trends*, McGraw-Hill and Company, 1933, page 209.

<sup>4</sup> E. de S. Brunner, *Village Communities*, George H. Doran Company, pages 70-71.

<sup>5</sup> Perry P. Denune, *The Social and Economic Relations of the Farmers*, Bureau of Business Research Monographs, No. 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, page 81.

<sup>7</sup> C. R. Hoffer, *Activities of Churches in Town-Country Communities*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 226.

time the country population apparently has not become affiliated with churches to the same extent that town or village populations have. Furthermore, it is probable that the prosperous and progressive farm families unite with the village or town church more frequently than the less progressive or less fortunate ones. If this is true, the chances that a certain proportion of the country population will be neglected, as the open country church disappears, are greatly increased.

However, there is no advantage in maintaining an open country church unless enough people attend to make it a vigorous, effective organization. Much of the appeal for the open country church is emotional in character and has its roots in traditional church experience on one hand, and in a fading philosophy of ruralism on the other. Probably the village or town churches will be the church center for an increasing number of rural people in the future if these churches awake to their responsibility and opportunity. Somehow, farm people must become an integral part of the organization, and receive the same pastoral care and oversight that members in the village enjoy.

In recent years the larger parish plan has appeared as a method of extending church and pastoral oversight to people on farms and in the smaller villages and towns. "It is the old circuit-rider system brought up-to-date and given a new emphasis and a larger usefulness."<sup>8</sup> The plan consists essentially in the formation of an organization by members of various churches, either of the same or different denominations, in an area including several neighborhoods and communities. These members contribute to the work of the organization. Employment of a staff of workers is embodied in the plan, this staff to consist of at least two pastors and at least one social service director. It is proposed that the pastors divide the work so that one is primarily engaged in preaching while the other will have charge of religious education. The social director is to be responsible

<sup>8</sup> *An Adventure in Ministerial and Church Efficiency*, The New Hampshire Congregational Conference.

for the recreational aspects of the work.<sup>9</sup> This plan appears to be sound from many points of view, especially in the fact that it provides for a sufficient number of people to support specialized and efficient service. The chief problem in inaugurating it probably will be a lack of vision on the part of the laity involved. They may not appreciate sufficiently the benefits to be derived. In some areas the plan probably can be utilized, while in other places different methods, such as the development of an efficient village church and interdenominational churches, will be more effective.

*Denominational Rivalry*—Another influence favoring overchurching in rural areas, besides the fact that churches were organized on a neighborhood basis, is denominational rivalry. During the time rural sections were being settled, various denominations endeavored to have their churches established in as many places as possible. They were surprisingly successful in this attempt, and now as a result many communities are favored with one to half a dozen churches. Each church had its members and these, in co-operation with denominational leaders, tried to keep the organization going as long as possible. Interdenomination competition is the inevitable result of such efforts, because many rural communities cannot support more than one or two churches. In cities the results of denominational competition are not so serious, because enough people can be found to support an effective organization for almost any denomination.

The efforts of denominations to keep their churches alive in many rural and small town communities is evidenced by the fact that home mission support is frequently given to help a church that is really competing with another church or churches of a similar denomination. The Institute of Social and Religious Research studied the practices of giving home mission aid in town and country churches in twenty-five counties and found a considerable number of cases where aid was given to competing churches. In these counties only 34 out of a total of 211

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, page 21.

aided churches were without competition of any kind.<sup>10</sup> Granting aid to a competing church is not easily justified. It may be positively harmful unless necessitated by differences in languages, or other differences equally important. The money for such work was donated in good faith with the hope that it would promote the religious welfare of people in home lands. But when the funds are used to perpetuate unwarranted competition, an entirely different result is obtained. The disposition of home mission funds in this manner demonstrates a condition in which the institutional organization has grown to be more important than the purposes it is supposed to carry out. An enduring and effective type of church organization cannot be built up on such a basis.

The most hopeful plan for the elimination of an excess number of churches is to establish a united church of some type. Such a church may be a federated church, an undenominational church, a denominational united church, or an affiliated church. In the first type each church uniting keeps its connection with its denominational body. Under the second plan the uniting churches cut themselves off from their denominations and form an independent church. When a denominational united church exists, a church of some given denomination attempts to serve the community, but admits members from other churches without requiring them to surrender creed, form of baptism, or denominational loyalty.<sup>11</sup> In the case of affiliated churches only a loose connection is maintained with some denomination for certain specific purposes. It is beyond the scope of the present treatment to discuss the advantages of these different types. Each one may be desirable, or each one may be unsatisfactory, under certain circumstances. Only a detailed study of conditions prevalent in a community can furnish a basis for evaluating the different plans.

Much praise has been given to the united church by en-

<sup>10</sup> H N Morse and E de S. Brunner, *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, George H Doran and Company, page 110

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Hooker, *United Churches*, George H Doran and Company, page 100

thusiasts, but like all plans that involve a modification of the old and familiar, it must be carried out with caution and with due regard for prevailing circumstances. Religious convictions are very deeply imbedded in human experience and a mere appeal to reason will not change them, for emotional feelings are also involved. There are, of course, many reasons for opposition to church union. They are almost as varied as the experiences of life itself. Loyalty to an existing church, lack of familiarity with the creeds of other churches, and selfishness on the part of certain individuals who hold prominent places in existing church organizations or in the community, may blast all hopes of co-operation. Sometimes denominational officials have not given their support to the project at the strategic moment; and occasionally church union has been proposed before the people were really ready for it. A campaign of education is almost always necessary; and activities that will help people develop the habit of co-operation are advantageous. As a rule, leaders are more advanced in their thinking than the majority of people in the community. In any circumstance a careful study of the situation needs to be made. Language and nationality differences, as well as creed, have a bearing on the question. If people speaking different languages live in the same area, it may be best for each group to have its own church. Or, existing creeds may be so unlike that no program of education possibly can cause them to work together successfully. If people once become divided on religious questions, no sort of conflict seems to be quite so destructive and far-reaching. On the other hand, when harmony in religious matters prevails in a community, a high degree of social solidarity is likely to occur. The cohesiveness of certain groups where a unified religious interest predominates is ample proof of this fact.

The ideal of only one church in a rural, that is a town-country community, is excellent; but in many places, for reasons already suggested, its realization may be impossible. Perhaps a more important question to consider is the number of people there are per church. If every church could have enough people to support it adequately, say 1,000 persons per church, many evils



of over-churching would disappear. The usual way to get a sufficient number of people per church is to organize a united church, but it is not the only way. Sometimes congregations of the same denomination may come together and thus secure a sufficient number of people. In this era of rapid means of communication and the consequent realignment of community boundaries the latter plan deserves consideration.

It is an interesting fact that rural churches appear as well as disappear. In the study of rural social trends it is reported that 186 churches in the area surveyed disappeared, but 123 came into existence.<sup>12</sup> The reasons for the appearance of new churches are numerous and no doubt justified, especially in areas where the population has increased rapidly. But it is also true that new church organizations spring up in well-settled communities that already have an ample supply of churches. Obviously their appearance in the latter instance must be explained on grounds other than absence of church facilities. It may be due to the fact that the existing churches do not meet the religious and emotional needs of these people, or it may be due to a continuation in the present day of inter-church competition. The new church constitutes an indictment of the efficacy of the church programs in many well-established communities to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of the people.

*Lack of Money*—There are many circumstances which account for the poverty of some rural churches. In certain sections of the country where returns from farming are meager, the people have no money to contribute to church work. All of their income is spent for the bare essentials of life. In other instances mortgage indebtedness, rise or fall in land values, crop failures and price fluctuations seriously reduce the amount of money available for church work. Nevertheless, the average expenditures for church, Sunday School and missions by 2,886 farm families living in different parts of the United States was \$28.28.<sup>13</sup> Very little variation was noted in the average amount

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, page 214.

<sup>13</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin 1466

spent by farmers in different sections of the country, though there was variation in the expenditures by families in the same section. One-fifth of the families reported no expenditure at all for this item. In studies made by the Institute of Social and Religious Research the data show that the per capita contributions ranged from \$7.60 in one southern county to \$37.54 for one county in California.<sup>14</sup> A bulletin from Virginia reports the expenditure for church support per rural member to be \$11.66, whereas the expenditure per city member in this state was \$25.33.<sup>15</sup> Even during 1930, when there was such a scarcity of funds in rural communities, the annual contribution per village member was \$17.84 and per country member \$10.75 in areas surveyed by the Institute.<sup>16</sup>

It appears that farmers follow traditional practices in the amounts they give for church work. An increased prosperity does not necessarily mean that rural churches will receive more support. It only enables people to give more if they choose to do so. Most farmers will be satisfied to give the traditional amounts unless they realize some definite returns for increased expenditures. Such an attitude places the responsibility for adequate finances primarily with the church itself. Somehow it must convince the people it proposes to serve that religion and the church are worth supporting. This may appear to be a big task for the church, but not impossible, since religious matters touch every phase of life. It is the duty of the pastor and church leaders to explain and interpret this relationship.

Over-churching contributes its share to inadequate finances, because too many churches cannot survive in a given area. Even in church finances there is a point of diminishing returns. Moreover, weak competing churches are unable to make an appeal which people with a practical turn of mind think is worthy of much support. It is a significant fact that, when the

<sup>14</sup> H. N. Morse and E. de S. Brunner, *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, Doran and Company, page 147.

<sup>15</sup> Charles H. Hamilton and William Garnett, *The Role of the Church in Rural Virginia*, Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 267.

<sup>16</sup> Edmund de S. Brunner and J. H. Kolb, *Rural Social Trends*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1933, page 231.

expenditures per church for strictly denominational churches and united churches are compared, the expenditures are higher for the united churches, and especially so for what are called denominational united churches.<sup>17</sup> Efficiency is needed in church administration, just as it is in other lines of human activity. The rural church that becomes efficient will be in a position to enlist the support of progressive farmers, while an inefficient one will be unable to do so.

*Inadequate Ministerial Service*—Inadequacy in this aspect of church work arises from two sources: (1) from a lack of a full-time pastoral service and (2) because many ministers who work in country churches are poorly trained for their task. Part-time ministerial service in rural sections has occurred often, for small churches with insufficient funds to employ a full-time pastor must hire one on a part-time basis. The results secured by pastors who are employed in this manner compare unfavorably with those obtained by pastors spending all of their time with one church. Rural church surveys are replete with the unsatisfactory results achieved by part-time or non-resident pastors. But even so, more than half of the rural churches in areas surveyed have not had pastors employed on a full-time basis. The development of plans to provide each rural church with a pastor are not yet in sight, although the union of small competing churches, and the development of new organizations only in areas that show promise of growth will help greatly in accomplishing this objective.

The lack of proper training is a serious weakness of the rural ministry. From about one-half to three-fourths of the white Protestant clergy have institutional training above the high school; a smaller proportion has college and seminary training.<sup>18</sup> Many ministers in this group are students at theological seminaries. Others are young men getting professional experience in the country with the hope that they may be employed later by city churches. A third group of rural ministers com-

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Hooker, *United Churches*, Doran and Company, page 114

<sup>18</sup> Edmund de S. Brunner and J. H. Kolb, *Rural Social Trends*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1933, pages 226 and 227.

prises older men who are obliged to accept rural appointments, even though they desire to work in the city. There are also a certain number of very capable ministers who prefer to stay in the country. Persons belonging to this latter group have caught the vision of service in rural communities and know the possibilities offered by a career as a rural pastor.

In order to be properly trained the rural minister must be cognizant of the economic and social aspects of rural life. He needs to know rural sociology and rural economics as well as theology. It is impossible for a pastor to accomplish maximum results as a religious leader, unless he is familiar with the problems his followers have to solve. Sciences like psychology, sociology and economics furnish a basis for the interpretation of these problems. Unless the minister does interpret the phenomena of life to the people in a meaningful way, wholly consistent with the extant knowledge of the time, he is likely to confuse them and raise more problems than he settles. Farm people are becoming more learned all the time. Many of them think deeply and thoroughly on the most profound questions. An uneducated minister cannot greatly inspire or influence them.

*The Church Program*—A considerable amount of emphasis has been placed upon the church program by various writers. Since the church is an institution which is designed to teach the fundamentals of religion and right living, its duty in this respect is clear. Yet teaching alone is not sufficient. The church with the aid of its pastor must help people to organize and to express these principles in their daily living. This can be done only by discovering the problems individuals and groups have to meet. Such problems cannot be determined on an emotional basis; they must be discovered as nearly as possible by a careful survey and study of the entire situation. Social surveys of the community are helpful in this connection. Circumstances vary in different communities. In some cases it may be that the church will assist in having a hospital built. In other places it may have to supply a wholesome recreational program. Sometimes it is necessary for the church to take the initiative in the development of co-operative marketing or scientific agriculture.

At the present time the need for constructive recreation is particularly important, since numerous forms of recreation characteristic of rural life have disappeared. It is true that certain commercialized forms of recreation have developed in rural communities, but these are not a substitute for recreation in which the people actively participate. Many church leaders are cognizant of this need and are planning their programs accordingly. A careful list of such activities was made of 47 churches in ten town-country communities in Michigan. The results are presented in Table XIX.

TABLE XIX. NAME AND NUMBER OF SPECIAL MEETINGS SPONSORED BY 47 CHURCHES IN TEN TOWN-COUNTRY COMMUNITIES.

Name of Meeting	Number of Meetings	Agency Sponsoring Meeting	Average Attend- ance
ST. JOHNS:			
Sunday School Party	10	Girls' Class	11
	7	Boys' Class	10
	21	Boys' and Girls' Class	44
	20	Young People's Class	35
	10	Ladies' Class	52
Choir Party	7	Choirs of M. E., Episcopal, and Congregational Churches	41
Church Nights	20	Churches	228
Mother and Daughter Banquet	1	Women's Foreign Mission- ary Society	134
Concert	6	Church	314
Church Fair	1	Church	600
Entertainment	3	Church	300
Church Conference	3	Church	100
Boy Scout Meeting	33	Church	30
HOWELL:			
Sunday School Party	2	Girls' Class	11
	10	Boys' and Girls' Class	30
	5	Young People's Class	20
	16	Ladies' Class	15
	2	Men's Class	106
	24	Men's and Women's Class	51
	1	Children and Adults	80

TABLE XIX—Continued

Name of Meeting	Number of Meetings	Agency Sponsoring Meeting	Average Attend- ance
Choir Party	4	Church	27
Church Night	10	Churches	95
Concert	3	Churches	307
Entertainments	6	Church	246
Home Talent Play	1	Church	650
County Council of Re- ligious Education	5	Churches	43
Athletic Contest	4	Church	20
Boy Scout Meeting	50	Church	35
WILLIAMSTON:			
Sunday School Party	{ 15	Adult Class	22
	4	Children's Classes	20
Church Night	11	Church	70
Father-Son Banquet	1	Church	190
Mother-Daughter Banquet	1	Church	72
Concert	2	Church	153
Entertainment	1	Church	180
LESLIE:			
Sunday School Party	{ 3	Young People's Class	41
	1	Adult Class	41
School Party	1	Church	24
Choir Party	1	Church	19
Fair	1	Church	375
Concert	2	Church	120
Entertainment	1	Church	150
Lecture	2	Church	165
Church Conference	1	Church	23
OVID:			
Sunday School Party	{ 22	Adult Class	40
	15	Children's Class	25
	4	All Classes	74
	1	Young Men's Class	50
Church Night	16	Church	130
Boy Scout	39	Church	20
Church Conference	4	Churches	130
Class Party	1	Church	17
Concert	1	Church	80
Entertainment	1	Church	85
Bazaar	1	Church	500

TABLE XIX—Continued

Name of Meeting	Number of Meetings	Agency Sponsoring Meeting	Average Attend- ance
<b>FOWLER:</b>			
Church Night	2	Church	143
Holy Name Society	1	Church	150
<b>WEBBERVILLE:</b>			
Sunday School Party	2	All Classes	43
Father-Son Banquet	1	Men's Club	155
Mother-Daughter Ban- quet	1	Church	204
Concert	2	Church	98
Entertainment	1	Church	325
<b>WALLED LAKE:</b>			
Sunday School Party	{ 12	Adult Class	21
	3	Children's Class	24
Church Night	1	Church	65
Choir Party	3	Church	22
Sunday School Conven- tion	2	Sunday School	92
Mother-Daughter Ban- quet	1	Church	225
Concert	1	Church	150
Motion Pictures	3	Church	73
<b>DANSVILLE:</b>			
Church Night	4	Churches	33
Entertainment	1	Church	85
<b>DIMONDALE:</b>			
Motion Picture	20	Church	87
Entertainment	4	Churches	120
Church Night	2	Church	128

The nature of the program of these meetings varied greatly, as the names would indicate, but nearly all made some provision for a number of persons to participate in an active manner. While the church may thus engage in these community development activities, it would be just as unfortunate for them to become the chief aim of the church, as it would be for the

church to become an end in itself. The primary and most important work of the church, it may be repeated, is to teach and interpret the principles of Christian brotherhood and right living. Community activities are a means to this end.

Some ministers and church members have contended that other institutions in the community, such as the school, monopolize the time and attention of the people. This may appear to be the case, but it is probably not a serious situation, if viewed in the proper manner. All activities have religious significance. And if church leaders can make this point clear, school events and meetings of various kinds will find a place in the plan of life emphasized by the church. It is a matter of little significance whether any particular meeting is held in the church or not. It is important to make sure that events in connection with it are in accord with the teachings of the church.

It is extremely difficult to determine when there is an excessive number of meetings in a community, for the effect of the meeting on the persons attending is determinative in this respect. It is possible that a meeting having a comparatively small attendance may be very beneficial to the persons who do attend. It is possible that duplication of meetings occurs on the part of churches themselves more frequently than duplication between a church or churches and some other institution or organization. At any rate, church meetings which have a general social and educational value do not adversely affect the activities of other organizations. The reverse situation in all probability is the truth. Some proof of this statement appears likely in Table XX,<sup>19</sup> which shows the number of meetings sponsored by churches in the ten communities previously mentioned. It is true that when all institutions or organizations in a community are active, a certain amount of co-ordination is advisable. And this is not impossible or inimical to community welfare.

*The Importance of the Church*—The church is an important asset to rural communities. No other institution or agency is so well fitted to explain the meaning of life and to direct the

<sup>19</sup> C. R. Hoffer, *Activities of Churches in Town-Country Communities*, Michigan State College Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 226.



TABLE XX. NUMBER OF MEETINGS SPONSORED BY CHURCHES AND CERTAIN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS PER 100 POPULATION

Community	Churches (a)	Schools (b)	Lodges	Study Clubs	Farmers' Organi- zations	Patriotic Organi- zations	Civic Organi- zations
St Johns	1.8	1 6	2 7	4	1 2	7	1.1
Howell	1 9	1.4	3.7	1 1	3	4	1.1
Williamston	1 1	2.9	4 1	.4	6	1 6	2.4
Leslie	8	1 1	3 4	2.1	.8	.4	8
Ovid	3 9	4 8	4 6	2 2	.7	.3	0
Fowler	.1	.4	.4	.0	1 2	.0	.7
Webberville	.5	4 6	8.0	1.3	.0	0	.8
Walled Lake	2 1	12 3	1.9	.5	0	0	7 8
Dansville	5	6.2	2.7	.0	1 9	0	.0
Dimondale	.3	.3	1.4	.2	.2	.4	.0

<sup>a</sup> Only meetings of a general social and educational nature were included. Regular meetings of churches and auxiliary organizations were omitted.

<sup>b</sup> Regular sessions of the school are omitted.

motives of people. It teaches a philosophy of hope and idealism at times when everything points to failure and despair. Human experiences are both pleasant and unpleasant. In some manner they must be related to a consistent plan of life. The church can help individuals to think their way through these questions. Perplexed persons turn, as a matter of course, to the teaching of the church for guidance when other agencies seem to be of no avail. But if the church truly serves the community, it performs an even greater rôle. It emphasizes the fact that the greatest satisfactions in life are derived from right living and unselfish service.

By virtue of the church, interests in spiritual values are kept alive. They are the source of motives that make the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian people. Much that community leaders hope to realize in social progress cannot be achieved unless Christian motives prevail. The modern community movement depends upon their realization. Co-operative activity is based ultimately on the belief and practice of mutual aid. Rural people have already realized the ideal of brotherhood, partially at least, in community relationships and they are

beginning to practice it along occupational lines. It is the province of the church to help them develop it in all activities where social responsibilities are evident. Agriculture is rich in social responsibility. The farmer works with God-given forces, and it is his duty and privilege to use them for the perpetuation of human welfare. The conservation of the soil and the production of food, for example, have a great deal of Christian significance. Failure to grasp this point of view makes the difference between a true husbandman and a man who uses the soil for selfish purposes.

If active and progressive, the rural church is an important agency in moral uplift. It can give, seemingly better than any other institution, a strong emotional sanction to right conduct. It is a matter of grave concern to witness the decline in morals that inevitably appears when the church ceases to influence people in a wholesome way. Baser motives are more or less latent in the human being. Unless there is something to inspire people to strive for higher values, they eventually exhibit modes of behavior that are detrimental.

The church renders a great service if it keeps in the community a good pastor who lives and works with the people. When well-trained, a pastor will be a leader of the highest type, for he will be able to interpret and evaluate different programs. Then, his contact with the people in an informal way is important. Without a capable pastor, people seeking personal advice and counsel on vital questions are obliged to get along without the help he can give. Crises in the lives of individuals arise, and they need to be interpreted. Complexes and neurotic traits are apt to appear, and any pastor who understands the rudiments of mental hygiene can be of great service in correcting them. Moreover, a pastor can be on the alert to locate talent in the community and give it encouragement. Perhaps nothing helps so much to crystallize an ideal when in the incipient state as an encouraging word by the pastor. He need not be an expert in vocational guidance in order to help young persons choose careers that are noteworthy and within the reach of the individuals concerned. The fact that some ministers are not fitted

by training and experience to hold such an important place in the community does not detract from the possible importance of their work. Probably more is being done now in a personal way by ministers than the average person believes. The great need is for more men who can perform these services well, because the future of the rural church depends upon the quality of its ministry.

The foregoing discussion has attempted to consider the rural church from the standpoint of its significance. Over-churching; lack of money, the training and work of the pastor, and the importance of the church to rural life have been emphasized. These matters are at the heart of the rural church situation and they constitute the main general problems which confront it. Other problems arise in different sections of the country and in different communities. In newer parts of the United States under-churching may exist. Then the problem is one of supplying churches and ministers for a sparsely settled territory. In other places immigrant groups constitute an important element in the population and the problem of reaching them in a religious way is a complicated one. The movement of people to and from the community creates another problem which the church must meet. A limited turnover of church membership is desirable perhaps, because new members bring a certain number of helpful ideas with them. But if the turnover becomes excessive, the results are unfavorable. Churches in parts of the country where the proportion of tenant farmers is high in comparison to farm owners are especially likely to be affected by a rapid change in their membership. All of these circumstances demand adjustment on the part of the church, and, even if the church does not readjust itself, it will not pass away. Its influence is too important for this to happen. The central problem which church leaders must solve is to discover the best methods of interpreting the purposes of the church to rural people.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the primary task of the rural church?
2. What circumstances are an index of too many churches in a community?
3. What is the trend in the number of churches in rural areas?
4. Does the disappearance of the country church indicate on the part of rural people a decline of interest in religious matters?
5. Describe the so-called larger parish plan.
6. What circumstances favor denominational rivalry?
7. What conditions favor the success of a united church?
8. What is the average annual contribution toward the support of the church made by farm families who are church members?
9. In what respects is the ministerial service of rural churches likely to be inadequate?
10. In developing a church program, what guiding principles should be kept in mind?
11. List the contributions which the church may make to rural communities.

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## CHAPTER XII

### THE RURAL SCHOOL

The one-room school was established by law many years ago. It was the companion of the open country church and the cross-roads store. This type of school served for generations to instruct rural youth in the three "R's" and such other matters as the time and ability of the teacher would permit. It is still performing its appointed tasks, although the consolidated school has taken the place of one-room schools in many instances. Statistics for state school systems show that there were 161,531 one-room school buildings in continental United States in the year 1925-26. These buildings are located in every state; several states have more than 5,000 of them.<sup>1</sup> In recent years these one-room schools, with one teacher and several grades, have been a subject of praise as well as criticism. Studies of educational methods have shown that it is the exceptional teacher, indeed, who can secure optimum results in a one-room school. Following are some of its obvious handicaps:

- (1) Several grades, varying from one to eight.
- (2) Small classes, thus making it impossible to secure the maximum stimulation and competition in class discussion.
- (3) The buildings are small and frequently poorly equipped.
- (4) Satisfactory lodging facilities for teachers are sometimes difficult to secure.
- (5) Short term
- (6) The salary for teachers is generally lower than it is in consolidated schools or in towns.

Data may be assembled to substantiate some of these points. In regard to buildings, a survey of one-room and two-room

<sup>1</sup> *Statistics of State School Systems*, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 39, 1927.

school buildings in six Michigan counties may be cited as an example. The results of this survey, presented in Table XXI, show that certain improvements are greatly needed. Some of these schools were in well-settled, progressive farming areas whereas others were in the cut-over sections; but the conditions in these counties do not differ greatly from those which exist in other states.

TABLE XXI PERCENTAGE OF ONE-ROOM AND TWO-ROOM SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN THE SURVEYED COUNTIES FAILING TO MEET CERTAIN STANDARD REQUIREMENTS.\*

	Ingham	Saginaw	Cass	Antrim	Roscommon	Marquette
Improper Lighting	62.6	51.8	83.9	75.0	75.0	3.1
Inadequate Lighting	35.4	46.1	27.6	15.9	25.0	3.1
Poor Toilets	24.2	33.3	19.5	9.1		3.1
Poor Floors	18.2	21.3	23.0	11.4	16.7	6.2
No Cloakrooms	41.1	37.6	70.1	75.0	66.7	6.2
Poor or Improper Heating System	34.3	15.6	43.7	20.5	25.0	3.1
No Play Equipment	40.4	77.3	64.4	86.4		71.9

\* Source T. M. Thrun, *Rural School Organization in Michigan*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 229

In an analysis of the duties pertaining to the job of teaching the one-room school, Mr. Verne McGuffey made a list of 112 duties and responsibilities which a teacher in a one-room school probably would be expected to undertake.<sup>2</sup> This list was then submitted to teachers in one-room schools and 300 teachers replied. Neglecting the last item which was, "Bring drinking water to schoolhouse," the results showed that 25% or more of the number perform 99 of the remaining 111 items, 33% or more perform 77 items and 50% or more perform 52 items.<sup>3</sup> These items were varied and included such activities as ordering supplies, doing the janitor work, taking full responsibility in matters of discipline and other similar duties. Frequently also, the

<sup>2</sup> *Professional Preparation of Teachers for Rural Schools*, Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 6, 1928, page 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 13.

teacher is expected to assume leadership responsibilities in the community in addition to her work at the school. Certainly the task of the rural teacher in a one-room school is a complex one.

But even so, the pay these teachers receive is lower than it is for teachers in other types of rural schools. The following figures showing the average median yearly salaries of teachers during the four-year period, 1921 to 1925, indicate the extent to which this is true <sup>4</sup>

TYPE OF SCHOOL	SALARY
One-teacher school	\$ 766
Two-teacher school	779
Three or more teachers in open country	842
Consolidated	993
Three or more teachers in villages	1,092

It may seem, at first thought, that the lower salary in the one-room schools and for other schools in the open country is justified because the cost of living is likely to be lower in the open country. This, however, is only partially true. Living costs may be lower, but the conveniences for living are fewer. It is sometimes difficult to find a satisfactory rooming place in the country; and transportation from a village center to the school is not always satisfactory or conducive to the maximum co-operation with parents.

The average length of term for one-teacher schools in the United States is reported to be 150 days. In two-teacher schools the average length of term is one day longer, that is, 151 days, while for schools with three or more teachers in the open country the average length of term is 157 days. In consolidated schools it is 168 days, and for village schools, having three or more teachers, 176 days. The corresponding figure for city schools is 183.<sup>5</sup> There is considerable variation from the average in the case of the one-teacher schools. Six predominantly rural states have less than 125 days of school.

<sup>4</sup> W H Gaumnitz, *Salaries and Salary Trends of Teachers in Rural Schools*, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No 6, 1929, page 36

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, page 37



Such circumstances do not attract the well-trained teachers to the one-room district schools. Frequently a considerable proportion of the teaching force consists of young and inexperienced teachers who begin their career in the country. Many of these teachers are girls and a majority of them get positions in consolidated and town schools, or they get married. Consequently, a new group of inexperienced teachers comes to the country schools each year. An idea of the minimum scholarship requirements a teacher must have in order to teach in these schools is shown by the fact that in 1926 fifteen states made no definite scholarship requirements. Six states had a minimum requirement of four years of secondary school work which might or might not include professional courses. High school graduation and some professional training, though less than one year, was demanded in fourteen states. Nine states require high school graduation and professional training of one year, and four states require two years of higher training in addition to high school graduation.<sup>6</sup>

Such are the legal requirements as stipulated by law. A study of the percentage of teachers in one-room schools in 22 counties in different parts of the United States having training beyond the high school gave the following results:<sup>7</sup>

Not more than	6 weeks beyond high school	26.6%
“ “ “	7 to 36 weeks' training	44.9%
“ “ “	37 to 72 weeks' training	15.7%
More than	72 weeks' training	12.8%

Evidently appreciable progress needs to be made in raising the qualifications of teachers. Maximum results cannot be secured by teachers without considerable professional training for their work.

While all of these facts seem to point to the disadvantage of the one-room school, there are some signs of improvement which portend that its future will be better than its present. One of

<sup>6</sup> Katherine M. Cook, *State Laws and Regulations Governing Teachers' Certificates*, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 19, 1927, page 16.

<sup>7</sup> W. H. Gaumnitz, *The Availability of Public School Education in Rural Communities*, United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 34, 1930, p. 35.

these signs is the increase of minimum scholastic requirements for teachers that has just been mentioned. A second encouraging fact is the attention that normal schools and colleges of education are paying to the training of rural teachers. Some of these institutions have established departments of rural education which are doing much through student training and student organization to develop capable rural teachers with a love for farm life. It is reasonable to expect that this work will develop in more teacher-training schools, as the professional requirements of rural teachers are increased by legislation. There is much justification for it, because the rural teacher has a different task from one in a town or city school.

Rural school supervision is another movement that is designed to assist the rural teacher and thereby to improve the rural school. Teachers in one-room schools work alone and, being inexperienced, they need supervision and friendly assistance. But unless some plan of rural school supervision is provided, it is impossible for these teachers to get much help. The county school commissioner cannot find time to visit the schools more than once or twice a year, and his visit is necessarily very short. Fortunately these circumstances are being understood more clearly by teachers, school officials and patrons. There is a growing appreciation of the value of supervision, even though in some states the movement has had severe set-backs, or has been abolished entirely, due to legal technicalities or other reasons.<sup>8</sup> Some idea of the need for supervision of teachers may be gained by noting the experience of 10,841 teachers in Michigan as reported by 77 county school commissioners in that state.<sup>9</sup>

This state has nineteenth place in a ranking of salaries paid one-teacher schools. It is probable the qualifications of rural teachers correspond fairly well to those of other states, especially those in the northern half of the United States. The necessity of supervising teachers in one-room schools is relatively perma-

<sup>8</sup> Katherine M. Cook, *Progress in Rural Education*, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 15, 1927.

<sup>9</sup> *Eighty-ninth Annual Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction of Michigan*, page 165.

EXPERIENCE OF TEACHER	NUMBER	PER CENT
None	1,793	16.6
One year	1,684	15.5
Two years	1,538	14.2
Three years	1,504	13.9
Four years	1,235	11.4
Five to ten years	1,864	17.1
More than ten years	1,223	11.3

nent, for, as has been observed many times, these teachers are a mobile group. Each year brings its quota of new recruits.

While the one-room school does not appear to be as important a center for social activity as formerly, it is, nevertheless, the chief agency in maintaining neighborhood activities. The school building provides a meeting place; and if the teacher has the qualities of leadership, much may be done in addition to the regular work of the school to improve farm life. Displays of school work, parents' days, agricultural exhibits and lectures by representatives of other communities are some of the activities that will interest adult persons living in the vicinity of the school. There is a tendency now for teachers and patrons to overlook the possibilities of the one-room school in this respect, especially since consolidated schools and other institutions beyond the limits of the school district compete for the time and attention of people.

The rural school will probably remain for many years. Certain circumstances, such as low density of population, inadequate finances and the attitudes of people toward consolidation will prevent the consolidated school from becoming universal in all parts of the country. The one-room school must continue to be the chief bulwark for rural education in thousands of places. It is poor social policy for either teachers or patrons to overlook its importance. Its handicaps are many, but most of them are not insurmountable. The school term may be lengthened, higher salaries may be paid, and teachers with more training and experience employed. It is largely a matter of public policy regarding educational procedure. Educators have been so desirous of telling the public about the advantages of the consoli-

dated school that they have somewhat neglected to focus public attention on improvements of the one-room school which necessarily must be attended by thousands of pupils in different parts of the United States. Moreover, the development of an appreciation of higher standards in one-room schools may be a potent influence in causing people to appreciate the advantages of consolidation.

*The Consolidated School*—The most satisfactory method of correcting the handicaps of the one-room school is to form a consolidated school whenever possible. There were 16,291 consolidated schools in the United States in 1926. Some idea of the extent of their occurrence can be gained by comparing the number of consolidated schools with one-room schools. The figures for the various states based on data for 1925-1926 follow on the next page.<sup>10</sup>

It is apparent at once from these figures that consolidation has developed unevenly in the various states. The reasons for this fact are not known, because to discover them would require a detailed knowledge of the school situation in each state. In some places a low density of population very likely makes consolidation impracticable. But this is not the only cause, for certain areas which are well-settled have relatively few consolidated schools. Legal impediments and the attitudes of people toward the plan are probably the chief reasons for a lack of consolidated schools when there is a sufficient density of population and taxable property to make their establishment possible.

Numerous advantages can be secured with a consolidated school that are not realized in one-room schools. The more important ones may be listed as follows. (1) More efficient teaching; (2) Larger classes; (3) Longer school term; (4) Teachers with more training and experience may be employed; (5) More complete buildings and equipment; (6) Facilities and conditions

<sup>10</sup> *Statistics of State School Systems*, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 39, 1927. The number of one-room buildings per consolidated school building was secured by dividing the figures in the column for one-room schools by those in the column for consolidated schools.

STATE	CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS	ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS	ONE-ROOM BUILDINGS PER CONSOLIDATED BUILDING
Continental United States	16,291	161,531	9.9
Alabama	450	3,245	7.2
Arizona	44	208	4.7
Arkansas	170 <sup>3</sup>	4,303	25.3
California	153 <sup>4</sup>	1,795	11.7
Colorado	188	1,862	9.9
Connecticut	..	576	...
Delaware	14	251	17.9
District of Columbia	..	...	...
Florida	151 <sup>2</sup>	945	6.2
Georgia	882	3,594	9.7
Idaho	52	964	18.5
Illinois	120	10,148	84.5
Indiana	1,019	2,900	2.8
Iowa	381	9,570	24.9
Kansas	174	7,228	41.5
Kentucky	296	6,122	20.6
Louisiana	500	1,513	3.0
Maine	324	2,004	6.1
Maryland	...	1,356	...
Massachusetts	..	657	...
Michigan	255 <sup>6</sup>	6,506	25.5
Minnesota	378	7,310	19.3
Mississippi	951	2,489	2.6
Missouri	309	7,980	25.8
Montana	86	2,479	28.8
Nebraska	96	6,185	64.4
Nevada	28	217	7.5
New Hampshire	17	683	40.1
New Jersey	274 <sup>5</sup>	514	1.8
New Mexico	1,431	827	...
New York	399	8,237	20.6
North Carolina	814	2,510	3.0
Ohio	975	4,742	4.8
Oklahoma	439	3,603	8.2
Oregon	60	1,613	26.8
Pennsylvania	431	8,298	19.2
Rhode Island	7	108	15.4
South Carolina	406	2,039	5.0
South Dakota	116	4,753	40.9
Tennessee	707	3,692	5.2
Texas	922	4,505	4.8
Utah	...	99	...
Vermont	50	1,080	21.6
Virginia	773	3,205	4.1
Washington	352	1,494	4.2
West Virginia	414	4,961	11.9
Wisconsin	77	6,655	86.4
Wyoming	98	1,184	12.0

<sup>2</sup> Statistics of 1923-24  
Districts

<sup>5</sup> Statistics of 1924-25

<sup>3</sup> Statistics of 1921-22  
<sup>6</sup> Estimated

<sup>4</sup> Union Elementary

favorable to the development of community activities are provided.

These advantages are evident enough and it would seem that

there should be little objection to consolidation. Yet, such is not the case. Many people contend that it is too expensive to maintain a consolidated school. Others believe that the one-room school is better suited to the needs of the pupils than is the consolidated school, while a third difficulty is sometimes created by neighborhood jealousies and the resulting difficulty in securing an adequate consolidated district.

Before it is possible to decide whether or not consolidation is too expensive several circumstances must be considered. A great many consolidated districts which have been formed are too small to maintain this type of school at reasonable expense. Nothing can be quite so fatal to the financial success of consolidation as failure to recognize the principle of sufficient amount of taxable property from which to support the school. Standards in this regard are hard to secure, though it has been estimated that 1,250 people are necessary to support a high school.<sup>11</sup> Also, an act, providing for the rural agricultural high schools in Michigan, states that a proposed district must have a total assessed valuation of at least \$750,000, or a total area of not less than eighteen government sections of land. The discovery and recognition of facts showing the size of district in terms of taxable property and population that can most advantageously support a high school will aid greatly in preventing the initial cost of consolidation from becoming excessive.

One way to meet this problem is to adopt the county unit of school administration and supervision. This plan has the merit of centralizing the administration of the school to the point where effective consolidations can be maintained. In the event that this is impossible, consolidation may be effected at different educational levels and thus offset some of the disadvantages of a small unit for either financial support or instruction. One level of consolidation would be to consolidate elementary schools to the point where maximum efficiency could be maintained. The next level would be to transport pupils in the junior high

<sup>11</sup> J. H. Kolb, *Service Institutions for Town and Country*, Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 66

school to a central place and finally to develop senior high schools <sup>12</sup>

Current expenses for consolidated schools established under reasonably favorable conditions appear to be about equal to those for one-room schools. In the former type, teachers are paid higher salaries and transportation costs have to be met, but economies are effected in costs for instruction, because there are more pupils per teacher. In a careful study of one-room and consolidated schools in Connecticut it was found that the current expenditures per pupil in average daily attendance was \$65.33 in consolidated and \$66.19 in one-room schools <sup>13</sup> Higher salaries were paid teachers in consolidated schools and other expenses incident to consolidation were included. But even if it costs more to maintain a consolidated school than a one-room school, there still may be justification for the plan. It is worth more. The consolidated school provides more effective teaching and the possibility of having high school advantages within the reach of farm children. These facts are important. Rural people cannot be progressive and at the same time be deprived of educational advantages that good elementary and high schools offer. A consolidated school provides stimulus for education that ordinarily is lacking in communities where one-room schools predominate. In the Connecticut study just referred to, it was found that proportionately more pupils of the ages fourteen, fifteen and sixteen left the district schools than left those where consolidation had occurred. <sup>14</sup> A comparison of median scores of pupils in large and small rural schools in eight states shows that in the case of reading 76.5 of the higher median scores were earned in the large schools. In arithmetic and spelling the corresponding percentages are 87.9 and 80.6. <sup>15</sup> Whatever may be the basis for comparing one-room and con-

<sup>12</sup> Walter H. Gaumnitz, *The Smallness of America's Rural High Schools*, United States Department of Interior, Bulletin No. 13, 1930, p. 71

<sup>13</sup> E. L. Larson, *One-room and Consolidated Schools of Connecticut*, Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education, No. 82, page 17

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, page 37

<sup>15</sup> Timon Covert, *Educational Achievements of One-Teacher and of Larger Rural Schools*, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 15, 1928

solidated schools, the majority of studies show that the consolidated school does more effective work. The reasons for this fact are numerous, but better teaching, longer terms, and a more careful grading of pupils are important ones.

The belief that the one-room school is more satisfactory as an educational institution for instructing the young scarcely needs any comment, because the contention is so obviously weak. Most of the arguments for the district school, aside from questions of support, grow out of a narrowness of vision and an ignorance of educational processes. The fact that the district school did succeed and does succeed in educating children in spite of its handicaps, is no justification for retaining it if a consolidated school can perform the task more successfully. Much of the argument for the maintenance of a one-room school, when the people can afford a consolidated one, is pure sentiment with no rational foundation.

The problem of securing an adequate district is a difficult one, for often the people in a sufficient number of one-room school districts will not be in favor of consolidation. In a majority of cases, a consolidated school boundary will roughly correspond to the community trade area. Consequently the relationship of the proposed district to the incorporated village is involved. Residents of country districts sometimes oppose uniting with the village because they fear taxes will be increased, and occasionally the village will not favor the plan of uniting with the surrounding rural districts. When these units consolidate, the village or town must share its control as well as its support of the school. The people in some incorporated places are unwilling to do this. They prefer to maintain the management of the school without any interference.

The village is often the most convenient location for a consolidated school nevertheless. If it opposes the plan this action greatly minimizes the chances of the surrounding country districts' having one. No rule can be stated regarding what villages should do, but it seems quite evident that any village in strictly rural territory, which attempts to set itself off from the surrounding country, is following an unwise course and must



sooner or later suffer the consequences. Prosperity of the village depends to a large extent upon the prosperity of its rural clientele. If rural people are not permitted to share the educational responsibilities and advantages of the town they may not cooperate in other ways. The educational interest is one of the most effective community-forming agencies in existence when properly cultivated. Any town that neglects to conserve it is in danger of losing the support of rural people along other lines.

Whether it is more desirable to locate the consolidated school in the country or in the village is a question that has been discussed to some extent. Those favoring the location of the school outside the village maintain that the environment is better suited to the welfare of children and that a school located in town will direct the attention of pupils cityward. Such arguments, however, fail to take due cognizance of the learning process. It is not the location of the school, but what the school emphasizes in its instruction that influences the youngster either favorably or unfavorably toward farm life. Curriculum and social approval are determining factors, not the location of the school. No great amount of imagination is necessary to picture a school located in the open country, which emphasizes subject matter pertaining to urban life to such an extent that children will overlook the most important advantages and opportunities of the country. On the other hand, a school in town may interpret the facts of rural life in an effective manner. The ultimate objective of the school is to prepare pupils as well as it possibly can for living no matter where they may be. The principal goal to be emphasized when forming a consolidated school is to secure a district that can support the school adequately. The exact location is of secondary importance.

Before concluding the discussion relating directly to the consolidated school, its importance as a center for community activities may be considered. In this respect the consolidated school has many advantages over the one-room school and over most other institutions. Comparatively few rural communities have buildings that are entirely adequate for community meetings. The consolidated school building, when properly designed, can

fulfill this need. The assembly room may be used for the auditorium. Kitchen equipment is found in the domestic science room and provision is made for heating, lighting and janitor service. Moreover, the school is a publicly supported institution and is in fairly close contact with a majority of families in the community. The superintendent and other teachers, if properly discharging their duties, will be leaders in extra-curricular activities that are educational in nature.

The school may be logically the center for all educational projects in the community, including adult education. It will often be the library center and may interest the people through its extra-curricular activities in art, music and other forms of cultural advancement. Community fairs, club exhibits and classes for study and discussion all form a part of the consolidated school program in community development.

*Problems of Rural Schools—The Teacher*—The teacher is the vital part of any school system. A poor teacher makes a poor school no matter what other advantages prevail. Teaching is ultimately personal in nature and the personality of the teacher has a great deal to do in determining his or her success. Technical training is of much value, but it cannot be a substitute for personal qualities that produce effective teaching. It is axiomatic to say that the rural teacher needs to be well-trained. This implies training in the technique of teaching and a broad cultural knowledge. The teacher also needs to understand rural life well enough to view its advantages and its disadvantages in an objective manner. Otherwise she probably will be prejudiced either favorably or unfavorably toward it. Undue praise is just as unwise as undue criticism of rural life.

It is argued sometimes that the teacher of a country school should be born and reared in the country. Such persons, presumably, will be more sympathetic with rural life and will make better teachers. However, this is true only to a limited extent, because many other factors besides the place where a person is reared determine his or her fitness as a teacher. The contention really means that teachers should understand the life of the community where they teach. Urban-bred persons might

be just as successful as those who have lived in the country, if they have been trained sufficiently well for work as rural teachers. This implies that their preparation will include the study of social and economic aspects of rural life in addition to courses in education. Otherwise, the prospective teacher may not understand and therefore will be unable to appreciate the social problems pupils and parents in the country community have to meet. Unless a teacher is interested in these problems the rôle of the school in community development may never be realized. Parents and school do not advance independently of each other. They advance together. A progressive school does not exist long in a backward community, and a progressive community is rarely found with an inadequate school system. Many capable teachers in district schools and superintendents in consolidated schools have found their programs in school improvement retarded by a lack of interest on the part of patrons and other persons in the community. It is then that the value of community activities becomes apparent. These teachers turn to social activities of a community nature as the logical means of insuring the perpetuity of an up-to-date school program. Training in sociology is of much value to teachers in this connection, because it gives them an insight into group processes and methods which must be used to stimulate group activity.

*The Curriculum*—The next problem of rural schools to be considered is the curriculum. The statement generally accepted by educators, that education is preparation for living, furnishes a basis for understanding and evaluating this problem. Somehow the child must learn to adjust himself to his environment, whether it be in the country or in the city. Consequently basic subjects such as grammar, reading, geography, history, hygiene and others need to be taught. In a rural district it is desirable whenever possible, to have the illustrative materials for such subjects drawn from the experiences of country people. This does not imply that the subjects are to be made vocational in nature. Rather, they are to be broadly educational in the sense that they acquaint pupils with life as it exists in the world about them. When pupils can grasp the application of the subjects in

the curriculum to the problems that they and their parents have, school work is meaningful and helpful. In other words, the subject matter needs to be related to the rural environment, not necessarily to get pupils to appreciate and understand rural life, but to educate them. Elementary school text books written from this point of view will be of much value in rural education.

When the high school period is reached it is desirable to include vocational courses along with the general course in the curriculum. Such a practice is well established in city schools. The prevailing occupations in rural districts are farming and homemaking. So, in a well-developed curriculum vocational courses in agriculture and home economics should be offered in the high school as electives. Otherwise, thousands of boys and girls who attend rural high schools will have no opportunity to get training in the work which they will do in later life. The Smith-Hughes Bill for Vocational Education, passed by Congress in 1917, fortunately has stimulated greatly the introduction of such courses. By the aid of this bill provision is made for the training and supervision of teachers in vocational subjects, and some financial assistance is given to school districts that employ the teachers. According to an annual report of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, there were 3,472 teachers in agricultural schools who were teaching for a full year of twelve months, and a total of 89,630 pupils enrolled in the vocational agricultural courses.<sup>16</sup> Obviously, agricultural courses are offered principally in farming communities, so this work represents a distinct aid to rural education. A publication issued by this board in 1923 shows the occupational distribution of former students of vocational agriculture to be:<sup>17</sup>

Now farming	59%
In related occupations	6%
Went to agricultural college	9%
Went to non-agricultural college	15%
In non-agricultural occupations	11%

<sup>16</sup> *Eleventh Annual Report to Congress of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, 1927*, pages 30 and 32

<sup>17</sup> *Effectiveness of Vocational Education in Agriculture*, Bulletin No. 82, Agricultural Series No. 13.

These percentages are based on the total of the known status of 7,552 out of 8,340 former students. Besides the work in day schools, 29,390 persons attended evening schools teaching agriculture, 4,302 attended part-time schools and 5,700 attended what are called day units.

Instruction in vocational agriculture is practical in nature and is designed to give pupils technical knowledge essential to successful farming. One careful study has shown that farmers who had been vocationally trained had greater average labor income than non-vocationally trained farmers in each type of farming. When calculated on a percentage basis the average labor income of the vocationally trained group was 163% of the average labor income of the untrained group.<sup>18</sup> Each pupil in vocational agriculture is expected to have a project, such as poultry raising, the care of livestock, or the growing of some crop. These projects are supervised by the teacher of vocational agriculture and are usually financially remunerative. Moreover, the entire class sometimes will have one or more projects which may be experimental in nature, or which will be a demonstration of an up-to-date method in farming deserving emphasis in the community. When the teacher of vocational agriculture is employed for twelve months of the year he becomes a permanent resident in the community and may instruct adults by evening classes, exhibits, timely newspaper articles and visits with farmers on their own farms.

In its technical aspects the content of the course in vocational agriculture must be determined largely by the nature of the problems confronting farmers in the particular locality where the school is located. But it must go farther, because economic and social problems are important. The farmer cannot escape the influence which these problems have on his business, so the sooner and the more thoroughly he understands them, the easier it will be to make adjustments to them. In a suggestive chapter on agriculture and high schools,<sup>19</sup> Dr. C. J. Galpin points out

<sup>18</sup> Federal Board for Vocational Education, Bulletin No 167, Agricultural Series, No 43

<sup>19</sup> C. J. Galpin, *Rural Social Problems*, D Appleton-Century Co., pages 105-109

that Smith-Hughes teachers of agriculture may have the pupils make an inventory of the agricultural resources and production in the community. Statistics gathered in this way when used in conjunction with the United States Census, furnish valuable material for study and analysis. They help the pupil to form the habit of studying economic and social questions.

Instruction in home economics is equally effective in training the pupil for homemaking. This work has not developed to the extent teaching agriculture has, for only 4,543 persons are reported to be giving instruction in this subject in either evening, part-time or all-day schools. The enrollment of students, however, totaled 218,406.<sup>20</sup> Some of these are probably residents in towns or cities, because interest in home economics is prevalent in the city as well as in the country.

*Rural School Attendance*—Rural school attendance is a third important problem in connection with rural education. No matter how good the school is, the child will not benefit by it unless he is in attendance. Two circumstances are characteristic of this problem. The first is the fact that work of truant officers is not well-developed in rural areas, and second, the nature of farming creates a special inducement for parents to keep their children out of school during the busy seasons. The result is retardation and lack of interest on the part of pupils. Census data show that 94.4% of urban children seven to thirteen years of age are recorded as attending school, whereas the percentage for rural children in this age group is 87.6.<sup>21</sup> For negroes in this age group the percentage in school is considerably lower.<sup>22</sup>

Laws in various states differ regarding the method of enforcing school attendance. Usually a truant officer is hired who may have charge of an entire county or may be appointed for a smaller district. If he has charge of a county it is difficult for him to investigate cases as rapidly as they are reported, because traveling from one part of the county to another requires con-

<sup>20</sup> *Eleventh Annual Report to Congress, 1927*, Federal Board for Vocational Education, pages 30 and 32.

<sup>21</sup> *School Attendance in the United States*, Census Monographs, No. 5, page 31.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, page 42.

siderable time. On the other hand, if the officer has a smaller territory he is likely to be acquainted with the families involved and therefore has greater difficulty in securing obedience to the law. Enforcement of school attendance laws is not unlike enforcing quarantine measures,—the personal factor confuses the situation and causes people to ask for special concessions. Then the conditions under which labor permits may be issued to children who work are very general in most states. The officer approving or deciding on the legality of the permit may comply with the dictates of custom or desires of parents rather than with what is best for the child.<sup>23</sup>

Absence from school on account of farm work may extend from a few days to several weeks, depending upon the type of work to be done and the attitudes of parents and school officials. It is always unwise for the child to stay out of school and is especially so when the school term is short, as is the case with many rural schools. If the same children are kept out of school regularly year after year the results are certain to be socially harmful. When a farm cannot be operated successfully without the labor of children during the time school is in session, it is either poorly managed or is unprofitable. But the children are not responsible in either case. It is unfair to penalize them educationally for a circumstance they cannot control or correct. Strict enforcement of school attendance laws and education of the people regarding the importance of regular attendance appear to be the most effective means for the elimination of this practice on the part of rural people.

*Financial Support for Schools*—One aspect of the problem is an unwillingness of taxpayers in some communities to spend a reasonable amount of money for education. Such an attitude has its roots in the characteristic frugality of rural people and in a lack of understanding or appreciation of adequate schooling for their children. The benefits of an education are not always measurable in dollars and cents, although the few studies which

<sup>23</sup> For a summarized statement of laws relating to truant officers and conditions of exemptions from attendance, see *Laws Relating to Compulsory Education*, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 20, 1928.

relate to this question show that, as a rule, higher earnings in farming are associated with longer periods of schooling. Moreover, the profits students in vocational agriculture make from their projects offer convincing proof that education pays. But the rank and file of people remain skeptical. This fact is especially significant, because 73.9% of the receipts from taxation and appropriation for state school systems in the United States come from local districts.<sup>24</sup>

Low density of population and a relatively small amount of taxable property per school district, are other circumstances that increase the difficulty of securing financial support for schools in rural areas. Cities have both a higher density of population and a larger amount of taxable property from which funds for school purposes may be secured. In the country it is more difficult to secure an economical-sized unit, so far as number of pupils and a sufficient amount of taxable property are concerned. Just what such a unit is from the standpoint of either population or taxable property can only be approximated. The minimum limit suggested in an earlier part of this chapter for population was 1,250 people, and for taxable property, a valuation of not less than three-fourths of a million dollars. Possibly future research will show that these limits are too low and that for certain services, at least, it will be necessary to have county units. The county may become the territorial unit for an increasing number of school activities. Its rôle in school affairs and other activities of a governmental nature indicates that the trend is in this direction. Already legislation giving the county certain administrative powers has been passed in a number of states.

Financial support of rural schools from state funds is another aspect of the problem under consideration. Practically all states give some money for education, so the policy is well established. The chief questions concerning it arise in connection with the distribution of funds. It has been argued that, since rural districts are handicapped by low density of population and a relatively small amount of taxable property per pupil, the contribu-

<sup>24</sup> *Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 39, page 127, 1927*



tion of the state should be large enough to offset these handicaps. This argument is strengthened by the fact that much of the local support for rural schools comes from a general property tax, as indeed do most funds raised by taxation in rural districts. The farmer often spends as much or more than his city cousin for school support and yet his child may be obliged to attend a poorly equipped school with an underpaid teacher. The removal of this handicap in rural education is necessary before country children can have educational opportunities that are comparable to those of urban children.

From the standpoint of social policy, state aid for rural schools is highly desirable. It is important, however, that the plan devised to accomplish this purpose shall not retard or hamper the initiative or interest of the local district in forging ahead educationally. It may happen that aid granted outright to an unprogressive school district would cause the district to relinquish its efforts to the extent that state aid is given. Consequently facilities would be no better than they previously were. It would seem that plans for equalization might embody advantageously some recognition of reward for effort in conjunction with ability of the local school district to pay for the expenses of its school. But the best method of equalizing school support probably will have to be decided by educators. The laws now in effect providing for reimbursement for rural school districts are varied. Some make it possible for a poor district to receive money for the repair and upkeep of school buildings. A few states authorize the expenditure of definite sums to school districts, while others grant aid according to the extent that the expense of maintaining a school exceeds a stated amount, usually a state average for the year.

A detailed study of a plan to equalize the burden of school financing in Michigan furnishes a basis for recommending that a classroom unit be made the basis for equalization. The cost of the minimum program per classroom unit is determined and the minimum cost to the district is in turn determined by the number of classroom units which the district supports. Then, if the funds available from local sources and ordinary grant from

the state are insufficient to meet the expenses of a minimum program, the state may supply the difference <sup>25</sup>

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the more obvious handicaps of the one-room rural school?
2. List the measures which give definite promise of improving the rural school.
3. Why is the one-room school important in neighborhood development?
4. What are the advantages of the consolidated school?
5. What conditions are inimical to the financial success of the consolidated school?
6. Why is it sometimes difficult to secure a consolidated district of adequate size?
7. Why is it advisable for teachers to be interested in community problems?
8. Why is it helpful to relate the subject matter of the curriculum to the rural environment?
9. What proof is available to show the practical value of courses in vocational agriculture?
10. What condition in rural communities tends to affect school attendance adversely?
11. What are the principal problems involved in securing adequate financial support for rural schools?
12. Why is state aid for rural schools justified?
13. What are the major problems involved in extending such aid?

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## CHAPTER XIII

### OTHER EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

*The United States Department of Agriculture*—In addition to the school, several other institutions and agencies are promoting educational interest in rural areas. An important one in this group is the United States Department of Agriculture. This department was established in 1862<sup>1</sup>. It was thought then that its chief duties would be the collection of statistics and the distribution of seeds and plants. The department has grown rapidly, however, and has assumed additional responsibilities year after year. It now has a great many regulatory duties, and an extensive program of research work and agricultural extension activities. The department attempts to correlate the interests and activities of individuals and organizations working to improve agriculture and rural life. Bulletins and circulars are distributed throughout the country, and a great amount of publicity is given to matters of interest to farmers through newspaper articles, stereopticon views and motion pictures. Crop estimates are made public from time to time during the year and recently an extensive system of broadcasting pertinent facts by radio has been organized. The yearbook published annually, contains, in addition to a vast collection of statistics, articles of value to farmers and other persons interested in the industry of agriculture. A greater number of people are being influenced by the efforts of this department every year. Its work is an excellent example of constructive governmental assistance to a basic industry. Annual appropriations for the department amount to several million dollars. In 1919 a division of Farm Population and Rural Life was established in the Bureau of Agricultural

<sup>1</sup> Edward Wiest, *Agricultural Organization in the United States*, University of Kentucky, page 28.

Economics. This division is of special interest to rural sociologists and community leaders because its purpose is to develop the social aspects of farm life. The division provides leadership by the Federal government in activities and interests of this sort. Several bulletins of a research nature have been published, and co-operative research projects in rural life have been arranged with land-grant colleges and other institutions. Considerable unity is thus given to the research work in rural sociology, and gradually, but surely, the social aspects of farm life are receiving much needed emphasis by agricultural leaders and farmers.

*The Agricultural College*—Land-grant colleges, which include agricultural colleges, were established by the Morrill Act in 1862. Later, in 1890, Congress passed the second Morrill Act which provided an increase in Federal appropriations for colleges of this type. These appropriations from the Federal government, plus state funds and other sources of revenue, have made possible the development of the extensive system of education now sponsored in the various state colleges and universities.

There is no intention here to consider the entire scope of the purpose and results of the land-grant colleges, or even of their agricultural divisions. It is possible to point out only the outstanding objectives which agricultural colleges try to accomplish, and their relation to the rural population. One major purpose is to instruct students in the science of agriculture. In other words, the agricultural college teaches students how the facts of science can be applied in a practical way to farming. This objective has caused some people to make the assumption that the agricultural course should train students to be farmers only. If students do not become farmers they believe the college has failed, partially at least, to accomplish its primary task. Nevertheless, such studies as have been made of the vocations followed by agricultural college graduates indicate that no more than about 27% are farmers. But the figures also indicate that an additional 46.6% are engaged in occupations closely related to agriculture; 24% are teaching; 10.4% are engaged in business related to agriculture; 8.4% are doing extension work in agri-

culture, and 5.8% are engaged in research.<sup>2</sup> These percentages show that agricultural colleges have done more than train farmers. They have trained teachers, research workers, specialists in agricultural extension, as well as leaders in the industries closely related to agriculture. Perhaps during the last forty years such institutions could have rendered no greater service to agriculture and to the nation than to have trained these specialists and leaders. It is of interest to note in this connection that a study of 2,171 persons listed in RUS (a register of so-called rural leaders) for 1925, showed that 686 had taken undergraduate work at a state college of agriculture and applied science and 715 had attended a state university.<sup>3</sup>

It is probable that training leaders in all phases of work that require a technical knowledge of agriculture will continue to be an important service of agricultural colleges. Whether or not a larger percentage of graduates will become farmers depends upon the profitableness of farming and the opportunity graduates have to operate farms. Surveys by various investigators have shown that there is a positive relationship between education and the amount of income farmers have.<sup>4</sup> When this fact is considered, the graduate of an agricultural college may find it advantageous to follow the occupation of farming even though the average earnings per farmer are low. A graduate should be able to make more profit than the average farmer. Students who contemplate entering an agricultural college would be more nearly correct if they thought of their prospective earnings in terms of what the average graduate of an agricultural college earns, rather than be guided by what the average farmer earns, as they probably are to some extent at the present time. Statistics regarding the enrollment of agricultural colleges show that, allowing

<sup>2</sup> E. H. Shinn, *Opportunities Before Students of Agricultural Colleges* Proceedings of the Forty-first Annual Convention of the Association of Land-grant Colleges and Universities, page 133

<sup>3</sup> Pitirim A. Sorokin and Carle C. Zimmerman, *Farmer Leaders in the United States*, Social Forces, Vol. VII, No. 1, page 42

<sup>4</sup> These results are summarized in *Extension Service*, Circular 52 (mimeographed) by the Office of Cooperative Extension Work, United States Department of Agriculture.

for a reasonable lag, enrollment tends to increase during periods of agricultural prosperity and decrease during periods of agricultural depression. Two circumstances very likely account for this fact. First, many agricultural students come from farm homes<sup>5</sup> and some parents do not have available funds to send their sons to college when agriculture is unprofitable, and second, owing to the fact that returns from farming are on the decline, farm boys prefer to take other courses if they do go to college.

It sometimes happens that after a boy leaves the farm and spends four years at an agricultural college, he dislikes the idea of returning to the farm, because in his opinion social conditions there are unsatisfactory. This is especially true if he marries a woman who is unsympathetic toward farm life. Such an attitude is unfortunate, for a graduate of an agricultural college often has the opportunity to be an important leader in his community. The graduate's lack of vision concerning what he may do in this capacity is partly accounted for by the fact that his opportunity in this way was not emphasized during the period of training. At present agricultural colleges allot so much time to the technical side of farming that the student does not have an opportunity to study the economic and social aspects of agriculture. Yet economic and social conditions are exceedingly potent in determining profits in farming and the circumstances that make a satisfactory farm life. One farmer or many farmers working in a single-handed manner cannot make a profitable agriculture or a socially efficient farm population. These goals can be reached only by group action. The time has arrived when it is advisable for every agricultural student to take one or more courses in agricultural economics and in rural sociology during his college career. These courses will help the student to understand and to interpret the social and economic problems which in all probability he will meet, whether he is a farm operator or engages in some vocation related to agriculture.

Home economics training provided in land-grant colleges is

<sup>5</sup> Sixty-one percent of the fathers of 933 agricultural college graduates from Iowa State College for the years 1910 to 1920 were farmers.

of great importance to rural people also. Statistics do not show what percentage of the graduates of home economics courses become rural home-makers, but some of them do, and many become extension workers in home economics, research workers and teachers. Their work and influence in the field of home economics corresponds to the work of agricultural college graduates in the field of agriculture. They are developing a scientific basis for housekeeping and home-making. The importance of this work is obvious

*The Agricultural Experiment Station*—Research is basic to the development of a scientific agriculture and efficient home-making. Very early in the history of agricultural colleges provision was made for research work through the Hatch and Adams Acts. The whole program of teaching and agricultural extension activities is dependent upon this activity because it is through research work that the facts are made available. A vast body of knowledge applicable to agriculture has been accumulated already and additional facts are discovered each year. New varieties of plants are developed. Experiments in feeding and breeding farm animals are carried on and the protection of both plants and animals against diseases and pests receives considerable attention. The results of investigations are published in bulletins or circulars and distributed without cost to farmers and other interested persons. This agency effects a great saving to farmers, because the farmers can profit by its experiments without having the expense of performing the experiments themselves. In 1928 for example the estimated value of this service to farmers, resulting from the application of new methods, is placed at \$842,470,995.<sup>6</sup>

The Purnell Act passed by Congress in 1925 provided for research work in home-making and the social and economic aspects of farm life. Studies are now being made in this field. They include investigations in marketing, agricultural co-operation, standards of living, rural organization, rural population and many others. In the field of home-economics, studies in nutrition, household expenditures and child care are selected. The

<sup>6</sup> United States Department of the Interior, Office of Education, Bulletin No. 9, 1930, Vol II, p. 618



results to be achieved with these lines of investigation cannot be evaluated yet. It seems logical to believe that they will be quite as important in the social and economic phases of farm life as investigations of problems pertaining to plants, animals and soils are to agricultural production. Furthermore, the two lines of investigation are supplementary to each other. Both are essential to a well-developed farm population and an efficient agriculture. The human element is very important in the farming process, because it utilizes the physical and biological forces. No matter how productive the soil may be or how pure blooded the livestock is, a farm will not produce the maximum quantity or quality of products if managed by an inefficient farmer. It is chiefly through research in social science that the conditions and techniques for producing efficient farmers will be discovered.

The following paragraph states in a concise manner the progress in research dealing with the social aspects of rural life.<sup>7</sup>

Beginning about 1900, also, but developing more slowly, another sub-field of social science was added to station research programs. This phase, rural sociology, notwithstanding its slower progress, has doubtless contributed much to what might be termed the humanization of socialization of agricultural research. Sociological research in agriculture and home economics received impetus from the Purnell Act in 1925 and, since that date, this field has made remarkable growth, the time considered, in an appreciation of its problems, the development of research methodology, the interpretation of data, and the publication of results. Sociological projects are now conducted by about one half of the State stations and by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Almost coincident with the development of agricultural economics and rural sociology, another field—home economics—dealing at once with all the problems of the rural home, whether physical, biological, economic, or sociological, has been evolved and added to station research programs. These three fields—agricultural economics, rural sociology, and home economics—have contributed enormously to the health, comfort, happiness, and intellectual and social advancement of rural people.

<sup>7</sup> *Report on the Agricultural Experiment Stations*, United States Department of Agriculture, 1933, p. 10.

*Agricultural Extension Work*—The third type of work sponsored by the agricultural college is extension work. The purpose of this activity, as the name implies, is to extend the influence of the college to the rural people of the state. It became evident, after the colleges and agricultural experiment stations were established, that there was need for some agency to get facts about improved methods of farming to people engaged in the industry. The discovery of facts was only part of the task. They had to be interpreted and brought to the attention of farmers in an interesting way.

Agricultural extension work had its beginning in the South where Mr. S. A. Knapp carried on demonstrations in improved farm practices. His work spread rapidly and was a great stimulus to the popularization of improved methods in agriculture. As a result of his work and of other influences the Smith-Lever Bill was passed by Congress in 1914. Extension work was then established on a permanent basis in all parts of the United States. Funds made available by virtue of this bill make it possible for the extension departments in each agricultural college to maintain a staff of specialists. These persons go to various parts of the state to address meetings, advise county agricultural agents and other leaders in matters pertaining to their specialty. They also inaugurate and conduct campaigns directly related to their subjects. In 1932, the last year for which the figures are available as this is being written, there were 1,178 specialists thus employed.<sup>8</sup> Obviously these workers cannot reach all communities in a state. To a considerable extent, they must co-operate with county agricultural agents, who reside in the county and come directly in contact with farmers. However, in a study of the effectiveness of extension work in reaching farmers it was found that "the subject-matter specialists located at the state agricultural college made contacts with nearly a third of the farms studied and a fourth of the farms reporting changed practices gave partial credit at least, to subject-matter specialists."<sup>9</sup> A total

<sup>8</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Cooperative Extension Work, 1927, page 4.

<sup>9</sup> *The Effectiveness of Extension in Reaching Rural People*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin No. 1384, page 2.

of 3,954 farms in Iowa, New York, Colorado and California were included in this study.

In 1932, 2,312 white persons were employed as county agricultural agents and 1,176 as home demonstration agents. Their work is a potent factor in the development of modern agriculture. County agents hold thousands of demonstrations pertaining to improved methods in all branches of farming each year. These demonstrations vary. The objective is to encourage types of agriculture or practices that seem to be most needed in each county. One significant phase of the agricultural extension program carried on by county agricultural agents and home demonstration agents is the utilization of voluntary local leaders in the work. Figures cannot reveal the importance of this influence. Its beneficial results are cumulative and not easily expressed in quantitative terms. Some idea of its scope, however, may be secured by noting a few figures in a statistical summary of extension work for 1931. At that time, 2,302 county agricultural agents reported that they had enlisted the services of 145,122 adult voluntary men leaders. Likewise, 1,261 home demonstration agents had secured the co-operation of 87,624 local women leaders and 15,740 junior voluntary local leaders were reported in the same year.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, 8,751 junior leader-training meetings and 19,561 adult-leader training meetings were held.<sup>11</sup> This work may be quite as far-reaching as its main objective, because if farm people have a sufficient number of leaders who possess a knowledge of the technique of effective organization, they will be able to get many advantages which would otherwise not be attainable. It is encouraging to note also that about 35.6% of all funds for extension work in 1927 came from county appropriations or from contributions by local organizations and individuals.<sup>12</sup> The fact that people appreciate this work is important, but their contribution to its support evinces a degree of self-help and initiative equally significant.

<sup>10</sup> *Cooperative Extension Work*, United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Cooperative Extension Work, 1932, page 52

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, page 85

<sup>12</sup> *Cooperative Extension Work*, United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Cooperative Extension Work, 1927, page 114

Since 1914 the methods used in extension work by county agricultural agents and other workers have changed to some extent. At first considerable emphasis was given to visits and conferences with individual farmers, but it soon became apparent that more effective work could be done if group activities and interests could be developed. Not only would the agent come in contact with more people if he met them in groups, but also a certain amount of interest would be developed by the group itself. In the study of the effectiveness of extension work previously mentioned, it is significant to note that when an association of rural people had been formed to co-operate with extension workers membership in the association had an important bearing upon the adoption of improved practices. Proportionally more members than non-members reported changed practices and more improved practices per farm.<sup>13</sup>

These statements are in perfect accord with sociological principles. An individual does not exist in a vacuum apart from other persons. On the contrary, he is very much influenced by them. His hopes, ideals and aspirations all come directly or indirectly from others. Hence, one of the surest ways to make extension work effective is to develop or utilize existing groups that will accept the program and encourage its adoption. Perhaps a farmer cares more about what his neighbors think than he does about the county agent's opinion of him and his farming methods. The same principles are valid in home-economics extension work; so better home tours, group meetings of various kinds and the organization of study groups constitute a major part of extension work in this subject.

The community is an important social unit in rural life because through its influence the habits and ideals of individuals are established. It is significant, therefore, to find agricultural extension workers reporting as follows regarding community activities for 1931:<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *The Effectiveness of Extension Work in Reaching Rural People*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin No. 1384, page 20

<sup>14</sup> *Report of Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics in the United States*, United States Department of Agriculture, 1932.

Communities surveyed or scored	5,193
Number of country life conferences or training for community leaders	3,361
Number of community groups assisted with problems of organization or program activities, or meetings	15,819
Communities in which recreation was developed	10,697
Community or county wide pageants or plays presented	6,558
Club houses, community houses, or community rest rooms established	1,033
Communities assisted in improving hygienic practices	6,750
School or other community grounds landscaped	4,867
4-H clubs engaging in community activities	15,487
Different communities assisted in the community work reported above	22,970

Boys' and girls' club work, or 4-H club work, as it is called, has become a major part of agricultural extension work. The figures for 1927 show that approximately 619,712 boys and girls are enrolled in these clubs. The number is probably increasing each year. Leaders for such clubs consist of county agricultural agents, county home demonstration agents, county club leaders and volunteer workers of various kinds. Their projects vary depending upon the section of the country and the interests of the members. Nearly every major phase of agriculture and home economics is represented.

There are many values in club work. It gives the members training in scientific agriculture. Every club member is supposed to carry on his or her project according to the most up-to-date methods. Project work is an important activity in rural or agricultural education. When members successfully complete their projects they will have gained considerable knowledge about scientific agriculture or home-making as well as training in self-control and self-expression. Moreover, the projects that club members have are frequently quite remunerative financially. The youngster often becomes convinced for the first time that there is a profit in farming for the person with initiative and ability. Club work gives the child a chance to see what may

be accomplished on the farm. It shows him the brighter side of farm life. Frequently the club member's father throws overboard his traditional practices and prejudices about farming and adopts the methods used by his son, when the profitableness of the newer methods can no longer be questioned. Club work fosters a permanent interest in farming and scientific agriculture. Often the members, due to the stimulus received in these clubs, pursue courses in vocational agriculture at high schools and some attend agricultural colleges.

The socializing effect of club work is important. Members learn the much-needed lesson of working together. Programs have to be planned, meetings scheduled, committees need to be appointed, officers elected, etc. Recently club camps and tours have become an important part in the club program. All of these activities train youngsters in the art of co-operation. They learn how to work together in groups. No sort of activity could more thoroughly annihilate individualistic tendencies and non-co-operative attitudes. If all, or even a majority, of the young folks now on farms could become active participants in club work, the next generation of farmers would have no great difficulty in using the co-operative principle in production, or marketing, or in maintaining community institutions.

The immediate effects of club work are of considerable importance in community development. Progressive citizens readily understand its economic benefits and therefore encourage it. Commercial clubs, banks and other organizations have given money for prizes or loaned funds for the purchase of pure-bred livestock. These investments are often the means of inducing farmers to keep pure-bred livestock or to grow crops from good seed. Then, club exhibits, contests and demonstrations also are effective in developing community consciousness and pride. Friendly rivalry in contests with club members from other communities helps to give competing groups a certain cohesiveness and mutual interdependence that pave the way for other activities of common interest.

Valuable as these results are, they cannot be realized if club work is carried on in a haphazard manner. Much depends on

the ability and initiative of local leaders, because without leadership the plan is seldom successful. Members are likely to lose interest and eventually drop their projects unless a leader keeps them from being discouraged. One test of successful club work is the percentage of members who complete their projects. The number of completions is always higher if a club has the supervision of a capable leader.

*Agricultural Fairs*—In the list of agencies that promote activities of an educational nature, agricultural fairs may be mentioned. This method of stimulating interest in agriculture is very old. Sometimes its educational value seems to be overshadowed by the purely recreational or amusement aspects of the occasion. Nevertheless, its importance need not be overlooked. There are four main classes of fairs: state fairs, district fairs (fairs that involve the co-operation of two or more counties), county fairs and community fairs. State fairs are the most elaborate. There are exhibits of all kinds including livestock, agricultural products, sewing, canning, baked goods, displays of an educational nature by schools, boys' and girls' clubs and various state departments that promote educational interests. There are also many exhibits made for advertising purposes and numerous features for amusement and entertainment. District and county fairs are similar to the state fair, but are smaller.

The value of a state fair as an educational agency has not been measured in a quantitative way. People believe that it has such a value. Every year thousands of farm folks make an annual pilgrimage to the state fair. There they see the best agricultural products of their state on display. These exhibits are a convincing proof of what may be accomplished in agricultural production and are a source of stimulation and emulation for many a spectator. Furthermore, the person who is deeply interested in any particular exhibit probably can learn some of the finer points of excellence of the various entries. In this way standards are developed. Farm people who view these exhibits discuss them afterward with their neighbors, and thus interest in improved agriculture is revived annually.

The entertainment features of a fair attract a great many peo-

ple. They are the chief attraction for some persons who attend. As in the case of the educational values, definite measures of results of various kinds of entertainment are lacking. Much depends upon the quality of the attraction. If it is clean and wholesome it must be counted on the credit side of the ledger. Rural people like some amusement just as other folk do, and the fair furnishes an opportune time to get it. On the other hand, entertainments of an unwholesome nature create false standards and low ideals. In the long run they very likely will defeat their purpose, because such events create an unsavory reputation for the fair.

District and county fairs are so similar that the two may be considered together. They draw support from a smaller clientele than state fairs but have the same effect in stimulating interest in agriculture and furnishing an occasion for recreation and amusement. The success of county and district fairs depends upon many factors. The chief one is a stable, interested group that will exhibit agricultural products. Without such support the primary purpose of the fair cannot be realized. Custom and tradition also play a part in determining the success of a fair. Some counties that have a prosperous farming population do not have a fair. Then special local factors, such as disagreements between the fair management and exhibitors and lack of co-operation between town and country groups, may seriously diminish the success of the undertaking.

There has been a tendency for the management of county fairs, especially, to be controlled by people who are more interested in gate receipts and concession fees than in agricultural exhibits. The effects of this tendency are undesirable, because exhibits of agricultural products are likely to receive secondary consideration. Consequently, fewer exhibits of this kind will be made, and in time the event may resemble a carnival more than a real agricultural fair. In order to prevent this condition some fairs limit the number of concessions and thus give the visitors more time and opportunity to see exhibits. The county fair furnishes an ideal time to have plays and pageants. Such activities are always interesting and may enlist the support of several, if not all, com-



munities in the county. Athletic contests between the various groups are also a popular form of entertainment. Demonstrations of various kinds, and parades, interest people and are instructive. The management of a county fair may encourage such activities with satisfactory results.

The community fair is an event of special interest to a particular community. Often it is not called a fair at all, but is designated by other names, such as fall festival, club rally, school exhibit, or agricultural show. The purpose is essentially the same, however, for the occasion creates an interest in agriculture and the social phases of community life. There are always exhibits of agricultural products and very likely other articles as well. The elaborateness of the displays will depend upon the size of the community and the support the fair gets from merchants and farmers. It is not necessary that the community fair have a large number of exhibits in order to be successful. There may be only one class of exhibits and yet the occasion will cause people to think about their own community and its possibilities. Athletic contests, plays, pageants and a speech by some person from the state agricultural college or elsewhere, are examples of events that may be used to supply other features. The community fair stresses fundamental interests and paves the way for other forms of community development. Usually, when a community has a good fair for a few years the people will manifest interest in a modern school, in pure-bred livestock or in co-operative activity. This event is an excellent prelude to other community development projects.

*Rural Libraries*—The establishment and popularization of library service is a means of fostering educational interests in rural areas. At present libraries are not found in many rural communities. The Committee on Library Extension of the American Library Association is responsible for the statement that "47,054,168 rural people, 83% of the entire rural population, are without public library service."<sup>15</sup> Several circumstances contribute to this lack. Perhaps the most fundamental one is absence of appreciation of library service on the part of rural

<sup>15</sup> *Library Extension*, American Library Association, page 11.

people themselves. They have not formed the habit of using libraries, notwithstanding the fact that the average rural resident spends a considerable amount of time in reading. But certain rural communities, it may be noted, do have libraries, because an interest in this institution has been developed.<sup>16</sup> This fact does not seem to be explained by differences in the nativity of people, by type of agriculture, or even by the profits in farming. Some communities with meager financial resources have put forth persistent efforts to get enough funds to realize their ideal. Their efforts seem to illustrate the fact that desire for library service is the most important essential in securing it.

The creation of such a desire is not an easy task. It is quite obvious that merely telling the people that they need a library is ineffective. Somehow, deeper sources of action must be reached. Reading is a habit and the use of library books is a habit. If people can be induced to begin reading, the solution of the problem is well on the way, because demand for a library comes as the habit of reading increases. One important advantage of a county library system is the fact that the person who has charge of the library and book wagon gives advice about books and in many ways induces people to read them. There is much difference between having a book within reach and having to write for it, even though it may be secured free on request.

It appears, therefore, that the chief problem in extending library service is a problem of technique—a technique in creating a demand for library service on one hand, and of fulfilling the demand on the other. The first part of the problem falls in the field of social psychology, the second in social organization. Concerning the creation of demand it may be stated that in agricultural extension work propaganda methods (bulletins, exhibits, circular letters and news service) have most effective results. Demonstrations have proven to be the second most effective way to get farmers to adopt new practices. Personal service

<sup>16</sup> Several successful rural libraries are described in *Rural Libraries*, United States Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1559.

methods rank third.<sup>17</sup> It is reasonable to believe that these methods would be effective in about the same way in creating a demand for libraries. Reading a book would constitute a demonstration in library extension work and the influence of the librarian would fall in the class of personal service methods. Agricultural extension departments in each state maintain a staff of experts to influence people to adopt new agricultural practices. Library extension has not been developed in this manner. A number of states have sponsored this work in a limited way, generally by employing a librarian to spend her time in extension work. However, the need of education regarding libraries is so great that one person can do only a part of the work that is urgently needed. Probably the most important step a state could take in the interest of better library service would be to strengthen its library extension work.

Rural library service now in effect comes from one or more of the following sources: state library, municipal library (town or city), township library, community library and county library. The service of a state library cannot possibly be extended to all rural communities in the state at the same time. State libraries have confined their services mainly to loaning traveling libraries books and to mailing single copies directly to individuals. These services are helpful and thousands of books are circulated each year, but even so only a small proportion of the rural population has an opportunity to use them. Recently some state libraries have been able to give valuable service to new libraries which are just getting established by loaning them collections of books for a designated period of time. This is a very valuable service. In the due course of time the local library can increase its stock of books and become established on a firmer basis. But under any circumstances state libraries supplement the services of local libraries and cannot substitute for the latter.

Municipal libraries, that is, town or city libraries, are closer to the rural population. Many of them give excellent service to people on farms surrounding the town or city. Wherever they

<sup>17</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin No 1384, page 19

do there is no complaint to be made. Unfortunately, this condition does not prevail in all cases where town corporations have established libraries. These libraries are supported wholly or in part by assessments of property in the town. Consequently town officers feel that a small charge for the use of the library to borrowers living outside the incorporated territory is justified. The charge is small, usually a dollar or two dollars per year or a flat charge of a few cents for each book loaned. But even though it be a small amount, the majority of farm people will forego the use of the library rather than pay such fees. Their unwillingness to do so is not due to lack of sufficient funds. It originates in the complex relations that exist between country and town. Country residents feel that they are an essential part of the community and, although they do not pay taxes to support the library, they support the town in other ways. Without their support the town probably could not exist at all. From the point of view of the town, the charge seems to be entirely justified. Each group maintains its views, with the result that the library is not used by country folk.

Where township or school libraries are established, this difficulty is not so great for any resident if the township or school district is permitted to use the library. Also in the case of a community library no discrimination is made between town and country residents, for both groups contribute to its support. The chief limitation of these libraries is the fact that they are likely to be small. The same limitation is apt to exist also in the case of libraries supported by an incorporated town or small city. There are many exceptions to this situation, however, and it would be unwise to discourage expenditure for a library on the part of a legal unit or a community, if it has a reasonable amount of wealth and population.

In recent years the county library system has gained steadily in popularity. It is a plan of extending library service to rural districts and small villages in an economical manner. The average county has enough taxable property so that a tax levy to support a library is not excessive. In South Dakota, for example, county libraries were maintained at a cost of 75, 48 and 83 cents

per capita in three separate counties during 1926. The cost per \$1,000 assessed property in these same counties for the library service was twenty-five, nineteen and twenty-seven cents.<sup>18</sup> The county library plan provides for the establishment of a central library and, in conjunction with it, branch libraries at strategic points in the county. A book truck is used to deliver and to collect books from the branch libraries at regular intervals. At present a majority of states make legal provision for this service and many counties have appropriated funds for library support.

The central library may be built by county funds or it may be donated to the county. Or, as is the usual practice, the county board contracts with some existing library to provide service to the entire county. The amount of support given by the county comes from tax funds. Details of the contract vary, but the objectives are quite uniform. When the library is established every resident in the county may use it without extra charge. The central library can keep more books than the library in a small town, and there is a possibility that the books will be circulated more frequently and widely. Also, a trained librarian is in charge. She can do a great deal to popularize library service. A county library supplements the services of libraries already established and in addition reaches neighborhoods or communities that do not have an organized library. Branch libraries are often established in schools, stores, post offices, or in any other place that the people can conveniently reach.

The necessity of library service for every rural home is unquestioned. A majority of families do not have many books in their own libraries nor money with which to buy additional volumes. It is less expensive and far more satisfactory to utilize the services of a public library. A private library of selected books is desirable, but it is more likely to follow than to precede adequate public library service. Good reading matter in the rural home is essential if people are to be intelligently informed about the world in which they live. It is unlikely that a non-reading population will be a progressive one.

<sup>18</sup> W F Kumlien, *Equalizing Library Opportunities in South Dakota*, South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 233.

*Farm Journals and Other Periodicals*—Although farm journals and other periodicals carry a great deal of advertising and are commercial enterprises, they may well be included in the list of agencies that promote educational interests in the country. These papers publish technical information about farm problems and a certain amount of material pertaining to other matters of interest to the farm family. The editorial page usually presents a well-balanced discussion of issues interesting to rural people. Perhaps no other agency is so potent in determining the farmers' opinion on public questions. Thousands of progressive farmers read one or more good farm journals. Other periodicals are effective also as a means of stimulating the thought of rural people and disseminating useful information. If such magazines are of good quality they furnish excellent diversion from the farmer's vocation and supplement its influences.

Local papers deserve mention in the list of educational agencies. Many of these papers, however, are of potential rather than real educational value. Papers of this type, particularly the country weekly in the smaller towns, are undergoing a change. Daily papers from the cities now reach a majority of people in the town-country communities and other forms of reading matter are available to the farm or village family. But the increased circulation of daily papers and magazines does not obviate the need of local papers. It merely changes their rôle. Now, the purpose and field of service for country newspapers must be the dissemination to readers of information which is not carried by other papers. Not only may local papers print these items but they may show their relation to the larger world of events and to the development of the community. Daily papers print news items of interest to many people. Books may supplant to some extent the serial story, but there still remains the untouched field of news too local for daily papers and yet suitable for printed distribution through a newspaper. Certain kinds of personal items are of interest to readers and make good newspaper material. Local announcements of organizations, discussion of civic questions, advertisements and other items all find a

place in the local paper. It appears, however, that many papers do not successfully circulate these items, but are inclined to fill the pages with syndicated material. This is not local in a strict sense of the word, and the more space a paper devotes to it, beyond a reasonable limit, the less valuable it is as a newspaper. There is also a tendency for local newspapers to neglect the country area surrounding the town in which the paper is printed, even though the country circulation is as great or greater than the town circulation. More news items are printed about town people than about country people, and the editor occasionally gets the point of view of the town rather than a community-wide approach concerning public questions.

If there is a sufficient number of people in the town and surrounding country to support a local paper,<sup>19</sup> then it is evident that the quality of the paper depends principally upon the ability and ingenuity of the editor. Many editors work faithfully year after year to develop their community and promote community solidarity. Whatever shortcomings they may have are usually a result of inadequate training and lack of social vision. In this respect the editor is not unlike thousands of people in other lines of work and it is unwise to expect him to be far in advance of them. Only when editors have an opportunity to study social relationships and processes in schools of journalism or elsewhere is it possible to expect an unusual manifestation of social consciousness on their part. The fact that the socially efficient local newspaper is likely also to be more profitable than an inferior one portends a promising future for the local paper as a means of disseminating information and creating intelligent opinion.

*The Radio*—It is too soon to definitely appraise the radio as an educational agency for rural people. As a means of communication it has great possibilities. The fact that much information of interest to farmers is now being broadcast indicates that the radio will rank along with, or excel, some other agencies as a

<sup>19</sup> A town having a population of 1,000 people and the usual trade territory around it can support a newspaper. Smaller towns may have difficulty in doing so.

means of education. Timely talks on farm subjects, market and weather reports and special features are now being given successfully. Discussions of a more general nature, as well as music, are also bound to stimulate the thoughts of the rural population. The radio is already as important a means of eliminating mental isolation on the farm as the automobile is in eliminating physical isolation. In 1930 a total of 1,371,073 rural-farm families and 1,995,513 rural non-farm families had radio sets.<sup>20</sup> These figures comprised 20.8% of the rural farm group and 33.7% of the rural non-farm group. Although detailed studies of the habits of rural people in listening to the radio have not appeared, the above figures, as well as the popularity of programs designed for the rural population, indicate that the foregoing statements are amply conservative.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Enumerate some of the important activities of the United States Department of Agriculture.
2. What are the principal purposes of the agricultural college?
3. To what extent have these purposes been fulfilled?
4. What is the purpose of agricultural experiment stations?
5. Discuss their activities in the promotion of research in rural life.
6. What is the purpose of agricultural extension work?
7. Why are community influences important in agricultural extension work?
8. In what ways do agricultural fairs act as educational agencies?
9. What are the principal problems involved in making library service available to rural residents?
10. Evaluate the educational influence of farm journals and other periodicals.
11. How is the radio being used to promote the education of rural people?

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<sup>20</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Population, Vol. VI



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## CHAPTER XIV

### RURAL GOVERNMENT

The relationship of the rural population to the institution of government has long been an enticing and much discussed question. This is true because the influence government has on the well-being of individuals and groups is very important. It protects people from injustices of various kinds, promotes activities that are of fundamental value, and affords a means by which national, state or local groups may unite to carry on certain activities essential to the welfare of the group concerned.

*A Brief Résumé of Farmers' Political Movements*—The scope of the present chapter does not permit a detailed discussion of farmers' political movements. Only the more important ones can be considered. One of the earliest and most far-reaching movements was the organization of the Grange in the 1870's-80's. This movement was widespread and greatly affected the thinking of the people on agricultural questions. It is estimated that in 1875 this organization had about 2,500,000 members of both sexes.<sup>1</sup> Its objectives were essentially educational in nature, although eventually all vital activities that seemed to affect the welfare of members were emphasized. In political affiliation the Grange remained non-partisan. Its membership supported the party or candidate that most nearly endorsed measures favored by the organization. Regulation of railroads, anti-trust laws, income taxes, the establishment of a Federal Department of Agriculture and encouragement of agricultural education were some of the more important measures proposed or endorsed by this organization. It is interesting to note, now, that the subsequent course of events seems to have justified the position of the

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Schlesinger, *Political and Social History of the United States*, The Macmillan Company, page 287

Grange in these matters, for some legislation has been enacted on all of these subjects.

Other organizations having objectives much like those of the Grange appeared in the 1880's after the Grange began to decline in influence. These organizations had various names. There was the Texas Farmers' Alliance, the Agricultural Wheel, Brothers of Freedom and the Farmers' Union of Louisiana. A merger of all these into one organization, generally known as the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union occurred in 1889.<sup>2</sup> This union proved to be of short duration, but interest in political matters did not subside. Grievances were too great and response from the established political parties was not forthcoming. Dissatisfaction continued, and in 1892 the Populist Party was formed. Candidates nominated by it received more than a million votes—about 9% of the total number of votes cast that year. But the Populist movement also had a short life, because its supporters merged with the established parties and through them attempted to win votes for the cause of Populism.

The next political movement of farmers that received much consideration occurred in 1915 and the following years when the Non-Partisan League was organized. This movement originated in North Dakota and spread later to all the adjoining states. Unsatisfactory marketing conditions, especially at terminal markets, caused much of the dissatisfaction that made the formation of the League possible, although inability to get any form of redress through the state legislature of North Dakota was a significant influence. After repeated appeals to this legislature for favorable legislation, the farmers were told to "go home and slop their hogs." At this point a genial organizer appeared on the scene and proposed that the Non-Partisan League be formed. The farmers were ready for action so the suggestion was readily received. The organization grew rapidly and for a time it gained control of the state legislature in North Dakota. Several laws designed to improve the economic and social status of farmers and laborers were enacted when the League was in power. This organization was a definite attempt

<sup>2</sup> Solon J. Buck, *The Granger Movement*, Harvard University Press, page 304

on the part of farmers to get help directly through legislative action. Since 1920 the political power of the members has decreased, but many of the laws passed by it are in effect at the present time.

A still more recent manifestation of the farmer's political influence appeared in 1921 when the Agricultural Bloc was formed in Congress. This Bloc represented a coalition of members of the Senate to get legislation favorable to agriculture. The industry was in a depressed state throughout the country at that time. Prices were low, and farms were overburdened with taxation or debt. Members of the Bloc realized that something needed to be done for agriculture, so they worked consistently for legislation that would be of constructive value. The influence of the Agricultural Bloc is demonstrated partly by the laws enacted during its duration. The measures are:<sup>3</sup> Amendment to the Farm Loan Act, increasing the capital \$25,000,000; amendment increasing the Farm Loan Bond Interest Rate to 5½%; the Future Trading Act; The Packer Control Bill; War Finance Corporation amendment; The Co-operative Marketing Bill; and an amendment to include a Representative of Agriculture on the Federal Reserve Board. These measures did not put agriculture on an equal basis with industry, but most of them proved to be of immediate benefit and nearly all gave promise of help. They demonstrate the fact that farmers do have a considerable amount of influence in legislation, and that lawmakers must recognize the national significance of agriculture.

*Generalizations Concerning the Farmer's Political Behavior—* These events as well as those occurring during the intervening periods furnish a basis for some generalizations regarding the farmer's political behavior. First, it is evident that if farmers act in a united manner, they can secure the attention of law-making bodies. There are over sixteen million people of voting age living on farms in the United States. Their vote is an important consideration in any election. The strength of rural people in politics consists not in the number of farmers elected to the state legislature or Congress, as some writers seem to

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Capper, *The Agricultural Bloc*, Harcourt, Brace and Co., page 159.

believe, but upon the amount of influence farmers have on the representatives who are there. The Farm Bloc just mentioned demonstrates this fact. The farmer's influence is most evident when economic conditions in agriculture are stringent.

There is no evidence at hand to show that farmers work consistently with urban labor groups in securing desirable legislation. The farmer is a capitalist as well as a laborer. He has investments in land, livestock and equipment, but assumes the rôle of a laborer when working on the farm. It is only when his interests seem to be very closely identified with those of labor that the farmer votes with the labor party. A recent example of this tendency on the part of farmers occurred in certain parts of the Northwest when the Farmer-Labor Party was organized. But continuous agreement between farmers and laborers on legislative proposals is uncertain if the occupational interests of each group remain as divergent as they are at present.

Observation and history justify a third generalization in regard to the relation of farmers to government: the farm population does not often act in a united way to get desirable legislative measures. In the past, united effort on the part of farmers has occurred only when conditions over fairly large areas were extremely unsatisfactory. The inability of farm people to agree on political issues is due to the diversity of circumstances in different parts of the United States and to the lack of vision farmers have in the efficacy of organized effort. In the South cotton is grown. Livestock and grain are produced in the West and Northwest. In the Central States general farming tends to be the predominant type, though there are sections where specialized farming is practiced. Legislation favorable to the livestock farmer may not suit the cotton farmer, or laws the fruit grower in Oregon desires may be useless to a fruit grower in New England. Even in state legislatures farmers do not appear to be in complete agreement on questions that concern their own economic interests.<sup>4</sup> The spread of the Non-Partisan League illustrates the point under consideration. This organization

<sup>4</sup>Stuart A. Rice, *Farmers and Workers in Politics*, Columbia University Press, page 215

appeared in territory that was similar in its economic resources and demographic conditions. A limited study of support the League received in North Dakota and Minnesota verifies the thesis that similar backgrounds of economic and social character tend to produce similar types of political behavior. Five counties in each state most favorable to the organization, as indicated by votes, were compared with five counties least favorable to it. Not only were the counties supporting the League similar in several important respects, but they differed to a considerable extent from counties least favorable to it.<sup>5</sup> Observation of political attitudes seems to show that farmers in different parts of the nation unite in support of legislation only when the measures are of benefit to all the major types of agriculture. Such measures are the ones most likely to be enacted. Many laws already passed tend to fulfill this requirement.

*Governmental Assistance to Farmers*—The benefits extended to farmers by government are so varied that a complete enumeration cannot be made. Some specific instances, however, are worthy of special mention as illustrating the trend. The United States Department of Agriculture is one of the principal agencies of government that aids farmers. Several of its services were described in the previous chapter. Early in the history of the nation the Federal government gave assistance to State colleges and the agricultural experiment stations. Likewise, agricultural extension departments have been developed. All of these agencies are of inestimable benefit to agriculture. There are few, if any, instances in the world where governmental assistance to rural people in an educational way is as far-reaching and as intensive.

The establishment of the Federal Farm Loan System is a definite effort on the part of government to aid farmers. Agricultural credit is a perplexing problem, and organizations interested in agriculture have worked for many years to solve it. Farmers need credit for short periods of time when livestock,

<sup>5</sup> G A Lundberg, *The Demographic and Economic Basis of Political Radicalism and Conservatism*, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XXXII, pages 722-32.

machinery, or fertilizers are bought, but when land is purchased credit for a longer period must be secured. The situation is especially complex in the latter instance if the loan has to be paid in three or five years, because the complete returns from an investment of this kind are not realized in so brief a time. The Federal Farm Loan Act is designed to help farmers in their effort to borrow money for land purchases or improvements on land. The act is broad in outline, although loans are carefully safeguarded. A significant feature of the act is a provision for the amortization method of payment. According to this method the borrower pays a certain amount of interest each year and in addition a small amount on the principal, usually 1%. When premiums are paid on the principal in this way the loan will be amortized, that is the principal will be paid, in about thirty-three or thirty-five years. The borrower may pay the principal at any time, but he is not obliged to do so. An idea of the use farmers in the United States are making of the Federal Farm Loan System may be gained from the *Eleventh Annual Report of the Federal Farm Loan Board*. The report shows that mortgage loans outstanding December 31, 1927, amounted to \$1,155,642,871 38.<sup>6</sup> This measure does not meet all of the farmer's credit needs, but it has been of great assistance to him. The results secured by the operation of the act illustrated well how the government may help farmers meet a difficulty inherent in the nature of their occupation.

Other laws passed by Congress that are of special interest to farmers are: (1) The Grain Standardization Act; (2) The Future Trading Act; (3) The Packer Control Bill; (4) The Co-operative Marketing Bill; and (5) The Agricultural Marketing Act. The purposes of these laws are indicated to some extent by their titles. The Grain Standardization Act is designed to help in defining the grades of grain and to insure official inspection of grain at certain shipping points. The Future Trading Act imposes a sales tax on grain for future delivery and on options of such contracts. It also provides regulation for boards of

<sup>6</sup> *Eleventh Annual Report of the Federal Farm Loan Board*, 70th Congress, 1st Session, House Document No. 324.

trade The Packer Control Bill makes provision for the regulation of interstate and foreign trade in livestock, livestock products, dairy products and certain kinds of produce The Co-operative Marketing Bill is of a different character. It legalizes action on the part of farmers' co-operative associations to prepare for market and to sell their products in interstate and foreign commerce. It is thus clear that the Federal government recognizes the principle of co-operative marketing among farmers and protects such action by law. The Co-operative Marketing Act is another illustration of how government may help farmers solve some of their problems. Many farm crops, unlike many manufactured products, are produced in small amounts over wide areas The task of assembling and grading them is an important one and has an influence on the profit farmers are able to make. Co-operative methods are especially effective in securing a successful marketing system for farmers The Agricultural Marketing Act, passed in 1929, went still further in an endeavor to help them utilize this principle The act definitely states that it is the policy of Congress to promote the effective merchandising of agricultural products so that agriculture will be put on a basis of economic equality with other industries In order to carry out this policy a farm board was created, co-operative marketing was encouraged, and a revolving fund of \$500,000,000 was made available by Congress. Loans from this fund to co-operative associations were legalized when certain prescribed conditions were fulfilled. Provision was also made for giving assistance to stabilization corporations and clearing house associations.

*The Agricultural Adjustment Act*—By far the most extensive effort on the part of the Federal government to help agriculture was embodied in the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which became effective in May, 1933. This act represented the policy of Congress and the President to restore the purchasing power of farmers to the level which it occupied in the five-year period preceding the World War. Since the World War farmers had not and evidently could not contract their production as rapidly as the effective export and domestic demand declined. The result was a continual decrease in the price of farm products



to the point where thousands of farmers were bankrupt or on the verge of bankruptcy. They were unable to make normal purchases of manufactured goods, and thus their situation had a retarding influence on the entire recovery program. "The Agricultural Adjustment Act, therefore, in order to remedy these conditions, empowers the President, through the Secretary of Agriculture and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, set up within the department of Agriculture, to assist farmers in adjusting their production of certain basic commodities to meet the effective demand without sacrificing income and to put into effect marketing agreements on agricultural commodities designed to insure fair prices to producers, efficient and equitable distribution of the products and protection for consumers of the finished goods".<sup>7</sup> Broad powers are given to the Secretary of Agriculture in carrying out this program. The main source of revenue for the project is to be derived from a processing tax levied upon the first domestic processing of the commodity. Several divisions are organized to carry out the program. These are developed according to the basic crops such as cotton, wheat, tobacco, corn and hogs, and other commodities. It is too early to state what the effect of this program will be; though, in a publication dated February 15, 1934, the Administrator of the act stated that the total farm income for crops in 1933 including rental and benefit payments was estimated to be \$3,271,000,000 an increase of nearly 55% over the preceding year. Part of this recovery could logically be attributed to the influence of the Agricultural Adjustment Act even though only a part of the program was just getting started at that time.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, a survey of three counties showed unquestionably that the Act was benefiting farmers and that they in turn were making purchases which benefited merchants and manufacturers. Fewer farmers were in need of relief. Others were spending the money to pay taxes, to purchase clothing, to make improvements on the farm, etc.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *The Agricultural Adjustment Act and Its Operation*, United States Department of Agriculture, October 1933

<sup>8</sup> C C Davis, *Agricultural Adjustment A Report of Administration of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, May 1933 to February 1934*, United States Department of Agriculture.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 261-270

The Agricultural Adjustment Act must be judged as an emergency measure and it is so stated in the law. Since the program is of an emergency character it may be necessary to carry out projects which would not be advisable in normal times. This point has been overlooked by critics of the act, but the fact remains. The act has benefited farmers; and it is certain that if the condition of farmers can be improved the condition of other groups will be ameliorated also. This act has set a precedent and a pattern of co-operation between farmers and government which may make possible systematic planning in the future that otherwise would have been impossible. Farmers are not unco-operative, but they have difficulty in comprehending their needs and problems collectively. The progress of the Agricultural Adjustment Act has shown that the government can help them in a constructive way to grasp and solve their common problems.

These laws show that the Federal government is helping farmers in many ways, but along constructive lines and in such a manner that the initiative and self-reliance of farmers is not curtailed. It is always a matter of national or state policy to determine how much help government may logically give agriculture. Opinions differ in this respect, and two points of view emerge. Many people believe that agriculture is a basic industry and that it should receive special consideration from the government. Only when agriculture is in a prosperous condition can the rest of the country prosper, it is argued. The farm population is a vital part of any nation. If agriculture is in a decadent state farm people cannot make their maximum contribution to national life, either as farmers or in cultural values. Persons holding the other view maintain that agriculture is an industry just as is manufacturing or any other kind of commercial activity. Therefore the people engaged in it, that is the farmers, must work out their own problems. Adherents to this theory believe that if the farmers would only become efficient in their farm practices and business methods, many of their difficulties would disappear. The farmer overlooks the root of his trouble by relying on government aid.

The foregoing statements represent rather extreme, though not uncommon, views. No one can tell which approach to the problem is correct, for either position is chiefly a matter of opinion at the present time. Probably future circumstances will show that there is some justification for both views and that the most desirable procedure will fall somewhere between the two. The assistance which government has given to agriculture thus far suggests the principle that it may help this industry to maintain itself on an equal basis with other industries, since it has special handicaps to meet in production and marketing. The problem, of course, is to determine the nature and extent of these handicaps. It is a big one involving an immense amount of thought and careful research.

It would be a mistake, however, to put the consideration of agriculture entirely on an economic basis, because social values are involved. If farm life has distinctive contributions to make to our national progress, as many people firmly believe, then those values need to be preserved. Unfortunately, rural social research has not been carried far enough yet to permit a definite statement concerning many social values. But, unless economic programs and policies conserve social values, they cannot permanently succeed. Economic principles and policies must be judged finally by their social effects.

*The Farmer and State Government*—The statements regarding the farmer and national government apply also in his relationship to state government. A larger proportion of farmers may hold offices in state government than in the national government, but farm strength in a legislature does not necessarily depend upon the number of farmers who are elected to it. The political influence of farmers depends upon the control they exert on law-makers regardless of their occupation. Since states are smaller in area than the entire nation, the possibility of farmers having a united interest in proposed laws is greater. Also, in sections not highly urbanized, farmers are apt to be the largest occupational group. Consequently several laws especially benefiting agriculture have been passed by state legislatures. The legislation in North Dakota has been mentioned already. Here

under the influence of the Non-Partisan League several measures of interest to farmers were passed. A state-owned mill and elevator and a state hail insurance law were exceedingly important. Minnesota and South Dakota have passed special rural credit acts and practically every state appropriates funds for agricultural education, the promotion of the livestock industry, the collection of agricultural statistics, and for certain supervisory duties pertaining to agriculture. A report of the United States Department of Commerce shows that during the year 1926 state governments paid \$52,144,106 for agriculture<sup>10</sup>. This amount was divided in the following manner:

Supervisory department	\$ 1,631,864
Extension Service, Experiment Station and Agricultural Associations	29,663,113
Live stock	14,105,774
Reclamation	1,987,244
All other	4,756,111

Excluding expenses for reclamation, which occur principally in the mountain states and on the Pacific Coast, appropriations for the remaining items are made regularly by practically every state. Moreover, many states have financed from time to time special surveys and studies of agricultural conditions that are designed to benefit the industry.

*The Farmer and Local Government*—There are four units of local government which are very important to rural people. They are the county, the township or town as it is called in some states, the incorporated town, and the school district. While these units bear some responsibilities and relationships to state and national governments they are to a considerable extent autonomous in nature. Many activities of local interest may be carried on by the people without the interference of larger units. Unfortunately perhaps, state and national governments have rather overshadowed the importance of local government in the minds of rural people. The expenditures of these units seem so

<sup>10</sup> *Financial Statistics of States, 1926*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, page 90.

large in the aggregate and the policies they follow so determining that smaller units appear insignificant in comparison.

Yet local government is important, both financially and in the benefits people receive from it. The proportion of the total amount raised by taxation that is spent eventually in the county from whence it came is high. Frequently it amounts to 85 or 90% of the total. Much misunderstanding exists in regard to this point, partly because a portion of the taxes collected by the state is returned to the counties in various ways. But the fact remains that so far as taxation is concerned, the amount of money raised and its use is decided in a large measure on a county, township or other local basis.

Generally speaking, local government in the rural parts of the United States is not administered with a high degree of efficiency. Many circumstances account for this fact, the principal one being the failure of citizens to take an active interest in their local government. People are not able to visualize their responsibility to government very well and many other activities absorb their time and efforts. Consequently local government has existed and grows chiefly by means of tradition and custom, rather than by conscious direction. Its machinery is poorly adjusted to present needs. County government affords an adequate illustration of this state of affairs. Decentralization is one of its outstanding characteristics. A majority of the officers are elective, even though their duties may be in no way policy-determining. The various offices are operated independently of one another and frequently the salary paid is so low that well-qualified men do not desire to become officials. It is thus possible for certain groups or cliques to dominate the practices of the government for their own interests.

The county board of commissioners, or county board of supervisors as it is sometimes called, probably represents the most centralized and policy-determining group in the county, because this group decides what expenditures shall be made. The number of persons on these boards varies. In some states county boards are limited by law to three members. Other states make provision for five and a few may have two or three times this

number of persons serving on a county board. The cost and efficiency of these boards vary greatly. It appears from one study of this phase of local government that the cost per session of the board increases with the number of its members, but it is doubtful if the services given are greater<sup>11</sup> In fact, large boards are apt to be less efficient for the qualifications of some members may be lower and the responsibility to voters tends to decrease as the board increases in size. Small boards can meet more frequently and deliberate on important issues more successfully than boards with many members.

The foregoing remarks about the efficiency of county government would be unfair, however, unless the reader understood that they represent general trends. Some notable exceptions exist. There are men in county offices who give years of unselfish service to the welfare of their constituency. Most of the faults of county government, as with other governmental units, can be traced back to the people themselves who by their own inertia permit inefficiencies to exist. In spite of obvious weaknesses county government has grown steadily in importance in most states. Changes in rural life quite independent of government itself have contributed to this growth. People demand new services of their municipalities from time to time. Townships are too small to meet these demands, so it is logical for people to turn to the county as the next larger unit. Most counties have enough wealth and population to supply in an economic manner many important services. Good roads and other means of communication and transportation have contributed to this change.

There has been some agitation on the part of public-spirited citizens to reorganize county government in order to make it more efficient. Numerous plans have been advocated involving in essence, either the adoption of the county manager system, the commission plan of government, or home rule for counties. Activities that may be provided for under these systems vary

<sup>11</sup> M. Slade Kendrick, *A Comparison of the Cost of Maintenance of Large and Small County Boards in the United States*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 484

widely. With the county manager plan a county board is elected. This board then appoints a manager properly qualified for the work and the manager selects assistants with the approval of the board. Under the commission plan, it is suggested that the activities of county government be classified into three or more divisions and a commissioner be made responsible for the work under each division, the commissioner to be appointed by a county board. Home rule for counties provides that if people have shown by a referendum or if the county board decides that a reorganization of the county government is advisable, a commission is appointed or elected, to draft a plan of reorganization. The proposed plan is submitted to the people and if a favorable vote is cast it is adopted. Other ways of improving county government would be to effect an internal organization for the purpose of combining overlapping functions and offices or the elimination of certain functions in the event that other units of government such as the state can perform a service more efficiently and economically.

Such reforms involve changes that are sure to elicit opposition on the part of many people. Offices and systems of government tend to become institutionalized as time passes and a certain clientele that benefits especially by them offers opposition to any change that decreases benefits to them personally. The advantages of new methods may not be sufficient to cause their adoption. People must get the habit of scrutinizing their government and testing its efficiency, just as they observe other agencies that serve their interests. Unless they do this, the chances of the present generation's sanctioning any plan of complete reorganization of county government are not promising.

Another method of improving county government is to attack the problem piecemeal. Instead of working for a general reorganization of existing methods, interested persons try to secure laws on optional activities that will make the services of the county unit more effective. There are numerous approaches to the problem by this method.<sup>12</sup> Legislation enacted in North

<sup>12</sup> A number of plans are described in *County Management* by Wylie Kilpatrick, University of Virginia

Carolina and other states to establish county welfare boards and to provide for the employment of trained social workers represents an improvement in public welfare activities. Laws permitting counties to have county units of school administration and supervision furnish an example of improvement in education. County health units represent an attempt to make county government more efficacious in health matters. These and other examples show that, although complete reorganization of county government may be desirable, the trend is in the direction of improving it little by little as people become convinced of the value each change has.

It is necessary to bear in mind also that in certain parts of the United States the counties themselves are too small. This occurs in areas where there has been a rapid decline in population due to the disappearance of some industry or in areas where for some reason the usual density of the population has not been reached. Examples of such areas would be the cut-over areas in the Lake States, the arid regions in the West, or mountainous sections which are sparsely settled. A study of the problem of county consolidation in Colorado establishes the following objectives in this matter.

1. The consolidated county should have at least 20 million dollars in assessed valuation under present conditions and price levels or it should have sufficient wealth to maintain a county government at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.
2. The consolidated county should have a population of at least 20,000 people.
3. Taxes for county purposes should not exceed 15% of the gross income of the population.
4. Distances to the county seat should not be over 60 miles for the greater percentage of the population.
5. County lines should not cross mountain ranges
6. The inhabitants should have easy access to all parts of the county.
7. The natural flow of traffic should be toward the larger cities and towns.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Scoville R. Heckart and G. S. Klemmedson, *County Consolidation in Colorado*, Colorado Agricultural College, Bulletin 406, page 31-32



These standards are very suggestive and indicate that the important matter to consider in consolidation is to get sufficient wealth and population so the affairs of the government can be effectively and economically administered. Different standards and distances might be desirable in other states, but the principle of combination and centralization is unquestionably necessary in many instances.

But improvement of county units is not the only problem in local government that confronts rural people. The whole question of reorganizing the territorial base of other units must be considered. As now organized many areas are too small to meet the demands people make of their government. A gradual change from the smaller to the larger unit is evident everywhere. Schools are consolidated. Road building is becoming more and more a function of the county. Even intercounty support for certain services such as the hospital is sometimes advised. In sparsely settled areas there is sound argument for consolidation of two or more counties into one unit. Many phases of county government could be improved by such action, but it is doubtful if this step is possible. Loyalties to established units and the benefits certain individuals receive from them may prevent consolidation regardless of how great the advantages may be.

The tendency for people to persist in maintaining an inefficient unit of government cannot be explained on the basis of economy. Political scientists have demonstrated beyond any reasonable grounds for doubt that in most rural areas larger more centralized units of administration for services of government would be advisable. But still the people do not respond. It must be true, therefore, that there are certain values in these units to the people which are not well understood or have been overlooked. They are probably psycho-social in nature consisting on the one hand of a fear of domination by a larger impersonal group and on the other of a desire to have the unit of government as a symbol of their political independence and importance.

The need for reorganization is even more urgent in the case of governmental units smaller than the county. Townships in-

cluding thirty-six square miles of territory arranged in a square fashion, do not circumscribe areas inhabited by people who have community activities and interests. Frequently the geographical center of the community is located at one side of a township, or even on the dividing line between two townships. When this happens the community area does not coincide with the political area and a diversity of interests on political questions arises. It is difficult therefore to secure funds from taxation for roads, schools, libraries or other improvements that modern communities have. Disputes over the location of new school buildings and improved roads that are financed by township funds constitute a dark spot in the history of rural life.

But the matter is complicated still farther. In addition to the embarrassment produced by the fact that township lines do not coincide with areas inhabited by groups with common interests, the rural town forming the center of a community is usually incorporated. In some respects and for certain purposes, it is set apart from the area contiguous to it. If people in a trade community wish to support some public service by taxation, at least two and sometimes three political units are involved—the incorporated town and one or more townships. Unless a majority of the people in each unit favor the expenditure, there is little chance of its being made.

For example, a survey of local governmental areas in New York shows that "the extent to which the town coincides with the true locality, as measured by the trading habits of the town and such governmental services as fire service, public library service, roads and governmental administration as measured by the difficulty in getting well-qualified officials, indicate that towns which coincide least with the natural areas tend to be the least well served in matters of local government"<sup>14</sup> The modern rural community in actual existence has no official boundary.

The results of this cumbersome situation are more serious than

<sup>14</sup> C. R. Wasson and Dwight Sanderson, *Relation of Community Areas to Town Government in the State of New York*, New York Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 555.

they appear to be on the surface. The first and most obvious one is an absence of many services supported by government that people need. Modern school facilities, libraries and community center buildings are not available in many places because no political unit is able to finance them alone and co-operation with other units is difficult or impossible to secure. Another result is the fact that some units of government, such as townships, will try to support a service that is too expensive for them. The service may be needed but the total taxable wealth in the area is too small. This is well exemplified in the case of some consolidated schools. Taxpayers grumble under the tax load and the school is handicapped in its program by lack of adequate funds. The difficulty is not with the school but with the size of the area supporting it. The same state of affairs may happen in the case of a library or a hospital.

A remedy for these conditions is not easily found. Existing units of government, in spite of their defects, usually have some value. Perhaps little would be gained by scrapping them in a wholesale manner. Seemingly, a more fruitful method of approach is to provide legal means whereby groups having common interests may co-operate to get the municipal services they desire. Laws permitting the formation of consolidated school districts furnish an example and illustrate a method. In most states a district can be outlined which corresponds quite closely to the natural community area. The principle to be followed is not a complex one after all. It may be stated in simple terms as follows: permit any group inhabiting a definite area to tax itself for the desired municipal services, provided the group is large enough to effectively support and use the service. For example, if ten thousand people living in any given area want a hospital, let them tax themselves to get it, no matter how many townships or towns are concerned. The same plan may be followed out with libraries and high schools or roads. The exact statement of the law or laws permitting this action ought not to be difficult. Examples already at hand show that this method is feasible. Some states permit incorporated towns and contiguous territory to co-operate in supporting services of civic

importance. Wisconsin has a community center act permitting people with common interests in any given area to tax themselves for a community center building and North Carolina has a law giving rural communities the right to incorporate.

In his book, *Rural Municipalities*, Dr. Theodore B. Manny proposes, in order to overcome the defects and problems in local government just mentioned, that a new unit, the rural municipality, be organized. This unit would consist of the incorporation of a rural municipality on the basis of the community area. Once incorporated the area would be governed by a board elected by the people. This board would in turn hire qualified persons to administer the affairs of the government. When the unit became organized township lines would be abolished. The zone system of taxation would be used to get financial support for municipal services, like water and light, which would be needed in one part of the municipality but not in other parts. The incorporation of any particular village or township area into a municipality would be optional with the residents. Whether or not this proposal becomes effective generally throughout the United States, it is certain that some plan is needed to prevent overlapping of functions and the confusion which now exists in the rural local government.

The basic obstacle in the improvement of local government is not legal. It is lack of interest on the part of the people themselves. If rural people seriously studied their government and discussed plans for making it more efficient the results would be evident in the necessary changes. There is no escape from the fact that existing units are too small for many purposes. The sooner people realize that every rural town, township or county cannot support every kind of service, the sooner local jealousies and ill-founded ambitions will disappear. Then co-operation among people living in different units to get municipal services will be secured more easily.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What types of legislation were emphasized by the Grange?
2. List other farmers' organizations which have actively promoted legislation favorable to farmers.
3. What determines in a large measure the influence of farmers in legislative matters?
4. Why do farmers in the United States sometimes disagree regarding the laws they want?
5. How has the Federal government attempted to assist farmers?
6. Describe the purpose and early results of the Agricultural Adjustment Act.
7. What views are commonly held regarding the proper function of government in relation to agriculture?
8. Why is the importance of local government frequently overlooked?
9. Enumerate the principal weaknesses of county government.
10. What methods are being used to correct these defects?
11. When is consolidation into county governments advisable?
12. How does the incorporation of a town complicate the administration of local government?
13. What are the essential elements in the plan advanced for a rural municipality?

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## CHAPTER XV

### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE RURAL POPULATION

The amount and quality of recreation that any group has are an important indication of its level of living and social efficiency. Writers define recreation in different ways, but the essential idea in any concept is the fact that it recreates or refreshes the individual. To the extent that activities produce this result they may be considered as forms of recreation. Physical exercise, play and amusement are all recreational in nature. Their value in this respect depends upon the circumstances under which they are performed. If they improve a person's physical or mental condition and are carried on with zest, they are recreational. The daily work of an individual also may be a source of recreation in the sense that stimulation and happiness are derived from it. Most vocational activities are pursued so continuously, however, that the body demands some form of relaxation or change in order to maintain good physical condition and mental poise. Consequently, in the present chapter attention will be confined to activities that occur when people are not working at their regular tasks.

*The Significance of Recreation*—It does not require much reflection or thought to grasp the significance of recreation from the standpoint of both individual and social values. Play is indispensable during childhood and some form of recreation is essential throughout life. Without it life becomes dull, sordid and monotonous. Recreation is the complement of work. If the work is a sedentary sort, then the recreation, to a certain extent, should be physical in nature. This fact partially accounts for the emphasis put on athletics and other games in cities. It is desirable also for the person to engage in some forms of recreation that will promote intellectual development. This may be done by reading, attending lectures, plays and concerts, partici-

pation in discussions, and in other ways. Over-specialization in recreation is no more desirable than in any other field of human activity.

The social values of recreation are great. Games of various kinds teach people the art of co-operation. If individuals can play successfully, they are likely also to be able to work together. No more telling argument need be advanced to substantiate this point than the fact that co-operative enterprises and farm organizations seemingly can develop their programs most easily in communities where people have been accustomed to meeting in groups and engaging in some form of recreation. Another social value of recreation is that it enables people to have face-to-face contacts. This is especially important in modern times when indirect contacts are becoming more numerous and potent. Contacts of the latter type cannot displace entirely those of a direct nature. Seemingly a certain ratio between the two is necessary for effective socialization. Direct contact influences the behavior of individuals in numerous and subtle ways.

Constructive recreation has a distinct moral value, because it prevents the unwise use of leisure time. One of the best criteria of a group's moral and social standards is the manner in which the members use their leisure time. The human race owes its advancement in no small degree to the creation of leisure and the intelligent use of it. If the recreation of a people is on a low plane, soon they will exhibit undesirable citizenship traits and low moral standards.

*Characteristics of Rural Recreation*—The recreational activities of rural people have some characteristics that are distinctive. The influence of farm work is perhaps the most noticeable and may be mentioned first. This work is largely seasonable, especially in certain types of farming. During the busy seasons of the year there are relatively few recreational activities. Then, when the rush period of the season's work is over, such activities may increase in number. The fall and late spring or early summer appear to be the periods when the festive spirit runs high. At the autumn fairs, exhibits and entertainments of various kinds are held. In the spring and early summer picnics are popular



and numerous. Nevertheless, extreme seasonal variations in farm work are not favorable to a well-organized recreational program. Activities that are started at one period may cease during the busy season and may be discontinued entirely. In some communities organizations plan their major programs during a time when farm work is lightest, with the result that during part of the year an excess of recreational events is apt to occur. However, some circumstances now indicate that the seasonal influence of farm work will be less potent in the future. More machinery is being used and farmers are getting the habit of taking a little more leisure during the busy season. Leaders of community organizations are favoring this practice.

Farming influences recreation in another way. Even if field work does not need to be done, there are always chores in the morning and evening. Consequently, farm families cannot leave the premises for long periods of time. Vacations have not become general in the country, though in recent years there is a tendency for more people to utilize this method of recreation. In a study of farm women's problems it was discovered that 13% of 8,773 farm women had vacations averaging 11.5 days.<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the farmer is as apt to take a vacation as is his wife. Good roads and the automobile have encouraged this type of recreational activity.

The rural environment provides fewer forms of commercial recreation than does the urban environment. There is a fairly definite relationship between the number of people in a given area and the types of recreation that can exist in it. Musical entertainments and the more expensive theatrical performances need more patronage than the average rural community can give. Entertainments of this type are chiefly a product of the city. Picture shows, pool halls and public dances are the principal forms of commercialized recreation existing in a small rural town. Instead of patronizing a variety of commercialized amusements as urban people are inclined to do, rural folks create their own forms of entertainment. Home-talent plays, parties,

<sup>1</sup> Florence E. Ward, *The Farm Woman's Problems*, United States Department of Agriculture, Circular 148.

and other events constitute an important part of the recreation of country people, provided institutions and organizations capable of sponsoring such events are active. The need and importance of recreation created by the people themselves is a second characteristic of rural recreation.

A third characteristic is the fact that not a great many people of any given age group can be brought together in the country. Games and other recreational activities often have to include both sexes and a wide range in age. Specialization is not developed to a high degree, and competitive games among local groups or teams in the same community are limited in number.

The fourth characteristic of rural recreation is its dependence on local leaders. As has been explained, commercialized forms of recreation are not abundant, and the people themselves must devise their own ways of using leisure time. If leaders are not available to help the people do this, leisure time is likely to be wasted or to be used in ways positively harmful. Without constructive leadership, recreation often takes the form of petty gossip, loafing, or gambling.

*The Present Status of Rural Recreation*—In order to understand the present status of rural recreation it is necessary to know something of its history. During pioneer times the work which people did furnished an occasion for social contact and recreation. The dance that accompanied the house-raising was truly social in nature, as were also singing schools, debates and box socials. Dependence on work and a predominance of neighborhood activities were the outstanding facts about recreation during this period.

When the modern type of agriculture developed, farming furnished fewer occasions for social contact. Now the farmer and his family are alone a greater portion of the time. In fact, few tasks aside from threshing and silo-filling bring farmers together when they are working. Partly as a result of this change and partly as a result of improved means of transportation or other causes, the neighborhood has ceased to play a prominent part in the recreation of farm people. The old-fashioned singing

school and debates are no longer of interest and neighborhood socials of various kinds have decreased in number. Consequently, just at the time when farm work was isolating the farmer more and more, such social activities as he might attend were diminishing. The result was a dearth of recreation for country people. Then commercialized forms of recreation began to be popular. The picture show made its appearance in the smaller towns, and the automobile provided a ready means of transportation to these towns. Some persons held aloof from recreational activities of this type, however, and complained that there was not the chance for the good times that there used to be.

Today the recreation of the average rural community presents a complex and sometimes disorganized state of affairs. Picture shows and pool halls are found in nearly all towns. Lodges also exist and make their customary appeal. Frequently churches have an aggressive recreational program and some other organized or semi-organized groups meet for social purposes. The schools may foster one or more forms of athletics. Baseball enthusiasts usually have a baseball team. These activities are good in themselves, but too often, unfortunately, they are not well co-ordinated.

Many rural communities are not provided with a building suitable for recreational purposes. Even if there is a building of some sort, a stage is frequently lacking, and the only auditorium available is one in a church. Kitchen and dining room facilities may be unsatisfactory and inconvenient for community uses. Fortunately the schoolhouse can answer the purpose of a community center building, if it is equipped with an auditorium, stage, dining room and kitchen. When its use has not been feasible, some communities have erected a building especially designed for community purposes. Such buildings are financed by individual donations, by popular subscription, by clubs and societies, and sometimes by taxation. They vary in size from simple structures with a minimum amount of equipment to elaborate buildings having an auditorium, gymnasium, library, kitchen, dining room and club rooms. Any sort of a building

for this purpose is a stimulus to community activities of various kinds.<sup>2</sup>

Some rural communities lack a suitable place for a playground and picnics, notwithstanding the fact that plenty of space is available. Vacant lots, a grove or a pasture field are ordinarily appropriated for this purpose, but they are not permanent or adequately equipped. Urban communities have found it profitable to use expensive tracts of land for playgrounds. Rural people have begun only recently to grasp the social value of such a convenience. At the present time the more progressive communities have parks and playgrounds.

In reviewing the present status of rural recreation the absence of paid recreational leaders should be noted. Social organization in rural areas is relatively simple, and some activities that might be paid for in a city must be performed gratuitously in town-country communities. This fact accounts for the paucity of paid recreational leaders. Rural people now expect pastors, teachers, and boys' and girls' club leaders to assist in activities that are recreational in nature, even though they are not directly related to their profession. The athletic coach hired by many schools is in reality a certain type of recreational leader, although his services as an athletic director do not extend ordinarily beyond the school. County Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. secretaries also spend a considerable amount of time in promoting recreational activities among rural groups.

The variety of recreational events that rural people engage in ranges from a few or no activities to a large number. Naturally, the habits and interests of different families determine to a certain extent their practices in this respect. Some families will be present at nearly all community meetings, and may go to places outside the community occasionally. Others will seldom leave the farm. Even within the same family the amount of recreation different members engage in will vary considerably. Certain differences among the various age and sex groups appear

<sup>2</sup> The uses of several community buildings are described in Farmer's Bulletin 1274, United States Department of Agriculture

to be quite general. Some of these will be noted in the following paragraphs.

*The Recreation of Farm Men*—Few studies, indeed, have been made to determine how farm men spend their leisure time. It is certain that most of them have some leisure and that all of them do not spend it in the same way. Many farmers use part of this time reading newspapers and farm journals or listening to the radio. Trips to town are also popular. Often these trips are combined with business, but they have a distinct recreational value, inasmuch as they break the routine of farm work. Visiting is a favorite form of recreation with men, and sometimes this degenerates into idling during the winter and on rainy days in the summer when it is not possible to work out of doors. Some farmers play games of a sedentary type such as cards and checkers. A few play baseball and perhaps a third participate in horseshoe games. Hunting interests some. Lodge meetings provide recreation for many, and church "sociables", fairs and other events of a social nature are attended generally by men.

A few years ago Professor C. E. Lively and assistants of Ohio State University made a survey of recreation in two Ohio counties.<sup>3</sup> The results secured in Paulding County are of interest because conditions in this county appear to be quite representative of many sections of the United States. The recreational activities engaged in by 50% or more of the men in the different age groups, who were interviewed in the county are listed on the following page.<sup>4</sup>

These lists are interesting and suggestive, even though the number of men considered in the various age groups is small. They show reading at all ages and preference for occasions when the individual can mingle with a group. Picnics and fairs, for instance, occur in the lists for each age group. The young men are more active than the older men and engage more frequently in types of recreation that involve muscular exercise. In the case of men over fifty years of age no type of recreation requiring

<sup>3</sup> C. E. Lively, *Rural Recreation in Two Ohio Counties*, Ohio State University, Graduate School Series, No. 1

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, lists compiled from table in appendix.

AGES 20-24 (34 MEN INTERVIEWED)	AGES 25-34 (62 MEN INTERVIEWED)	AGES 35-49 (81 MEN INTERVIEWED)	AGES OVER 50 (73 MEN INTERVIEWED)
Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
Hunting	Hunting	Hunting	Picnics
Fishing	Picnics	Picnics	Sunday
Picnics	Horseshoes	Sunday	visits
Swimming	Sunday	visits	Institutes
Horseshoes	visits	Reunions	Fairs
Movies	Church	Institutes	
Chautauqua	socials	Fairs	
Church	Fairs		
socials			
Ice cream			
socials			
Pot-luck			
Fairs			

the expenditure of much muscular energy is found. Perhaps, since farm work furnishes a sufficient amount of physical exercise, recreation of this type is not so necessary. A study of the leisure time of farmers in South Carolina, although not divided according to age groups, shows similar preferences in the matter of recreation.<sup>5</sup> Many farmers get along very well with no exercise except that which is secured in connection with their labor. Farm work is quite varied and necessarily changes to some extent from season to season. Consequently, the need of farmers for vacations in order to keep in good physical condition may not be as great as it is for people who are engaged in sedentary and more routine tasks. A vacation is valuable, though, if it furnishes new sources of contacts and ideas.

Reading as a form of recreation may well be encouraged as may also participation in the activities of organizations. Visiting is also desirable. The main objective is to make such contacts stimulating and constructive. Unless this purpose is kept in mind, visiting may be merely meaningless conversation, and organization ceremonies or activities performed in a perfunctory manner of little value.

<sup>5</sup> Mary E. Frayser, *The Use of Leisure in Selected Areas of South Carolina*, South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 263.

*The Recreation of Farm Women*—The farm woman's need for recreation is perhaps greater than that of her husband. Her work is more confining and routine. Most women have a little time for rest during the day, though it is far too short, especially for the woman who must do all the housework and take care of several small children. In the survey relating to the farm woman's problems, made by the United States Department of Agriculture, it was found that the average hours of rest for 8,360 farm women during the day in summer was 1.6. In the winter the rest period is somewhat longer, as the average for 8,164 women was 2.4 hours.<sup>6</sup>

The average farm woman reads a great deal and may knit, do "fancy work" or similar feminine activities. Music in its various forms affords recreation for many. Sunday and evening visiting is also popular, and visiting by telephone is not uncommon. Occasional trips to town form a part of the recreation that farm women have. Church activities and kindred organizations are a medium of social contact and recreation for a large number

AGES 20-24 (31 WOMEN INTERVIEWED)	AGES 25-34 (52 WOMEN INTERVIEWED)	AGES 35-49 (88 WOMEN INTERVIEWED)	AGES 50 AND OVER (57 WOMEN INTERVIEWED)
Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
Fancy work	Fancy work	Picnics	Sunday
Picnics	Picnics	Concerts	visiting
Shows	Home parties	Sunday	
Movies	Concerts	visiting	
Lectures	Sunday	Reunions	
Evening	visiting	Church	
visiting	Church	socials	
Sunday	socials	Institutes	
visiting	Fairs	Fairs	
Ice cream			
socials			
Church			
socials			
Pot-luck			
Fairs			

<sup>6</sup> *The Farm Woman's Problems*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Circular 148, page 7.

of women. In the survey of recreation in Paulding County, Ohio, previously mentioned, the activities engaged in by more than 50% of farm women are listed on the preceding page.<sup>7</sup>

It is evident from these lists that reading is a popular form of recreation in all age groups, as are also picnics, church sociables and Sunday visiting. The women between twenty to twenty-four years of age engage in more types of recreation than women in other age groups. The number of activities decreases very rapidly after fifty years of age. No form of athletics is found in any list. This survey was made before the radio became so general and popular. If such a survey were to be made now, listening to the radio undoubtedly would be included as an important recreation for both men and women.

*The Recreation of Young People*—Young people, that is, persons approximately sixteen to nineteen years of age, become dissatisfied more frequently than other groups with the recreational facilities in the country and seek amusement and social contacts elsewhere. In many respects the recreation of this group constitutes the most crucial phase in the whole field of rural recreation. A study of community relationships of young people in four Missouri communities, makes available some significant facts in this connection. The investigators found that 56% of all activity-wishes of young people were recreational, but that relatively few organizations existed for recreational purposes and only a small proportion of young people were members of them.<sup>8</sup> This condition is not uncommon and reflects a situation in which the young people are forced to live in an adult-made world. Older persons are in control of community affairs and frequently fail to realize the desire for recreation that the young folks have. Adults forget how they felt during the period of adolescence. Only recently, as the facts of psychology and the social significance of recreation have become known, has there been a more lenient attitude manifested toward it on the part of adults. Fortunately young people's

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, lists compiled from table in appendix

<sup>8</sup> E. L. Morgan and Henry J. Burt, *Community Relations of Young People*, Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 110.



organizations are now increasing in number. In the four Missouri communities just referred to, there were 66 religious organizations for young people, 18 social organizations, 5 educational organizations, and 8 recreational organizations.<sup>9</sup> In addition there were 197 unorganized events in these communities that young people might attend and a total of 15 semi-organized events. There apparently was not an extreme paucity of recreation for young people in these places, even though there were few organizations designed especially to meet recreational needs.

Young people in Paulding County, Ohio, also enjoyed a fairly large number of activities participated in by 50% or more of persons sixteen to nineteen years of age, as shown by the following lists.<sup>10</sup>

MALES 16-19 (28 PERSONS INTERVIEWED)	FEMALES 16-19 (27 PERSONS INTERVIEWED)
Hunting	Reading
Fishing	Fancy work
Picnics	Picnics
Swimming	Movies
Horseshoe	Lectures
Movies	Chautauquas
Lectures	Evening visiting
Evening visiting	Sunday visiting
Sunday visiting	Ice cream sociables
Ice cream sociables	Church sociables
Church sociables	Pot-luck
Pot-luck	Fairs
Fairs	

Another study in South Carolina indicates that young people in that state engage in practically the same type of recreational activities.<sup>11</sup> However, some farms were small and the income did not provide for an adequate standard of living. Recreational interests were therefore limited somewhat, though many

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, page 64

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, lists compiled from table in appendix

<sup>11</sup> Mary E. Frayser, *The Play and Recreation of Children and Youth in Selected Areas of South Carolina*, South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 275.

outdoor activities like hunting, fishing, were a possibility and many young people engaged in these activities.

Prudent people are convinced that the vital question concerning the recreation of young people is, "What type of recreation shall they have?" It is quite certain that they will have some kind. The desire for recreation and congenial companionship is too great for the average young person to resist. Some parents have tried to curtail these interests of their children, but have found that they were either failing to do so or that the children developed undesirable traits of personality. During the ages from sixteen to nineteen and later, young persons demand, and should have, a certain amount of association with members of both sexes. Recreation may furnish the opportunity for this association in a constructive way without necessarily being a courtship affair. It is of interest to note in the foregoing list that many activities are popular with both males and females. Unless community leaders recognize these facts and provide ample recreation for their young people, the latter will seek recreation outside the community. If this happens, the probabilities are that commercialized amusements will be the chief attraction for them. It is not sufficient for leaders merely to provide a recreational event for the young people to attend. It must be interesting enough to appeal to them in spite of the magnetism offered by distant and commercialized amusements. A policy of substitution rather than repression must be followed. Wise community leaders know that one of the best ways to interest young people in constructive types of recreation is to give them a part in planning programs and in participating in them. Adults may co-operate, but should not dominate the situation.

*The Recreation of Boys and Girls*—Until recently the recreation of boys and girls has been an unexplored field. Little information of a scientific character was known about their recreation and scarcely no thought was given to it. Now the attention of educators and others is being focused on the subject. Many cities provide organized play for children under the direction of competent leaders, and an ample supply of playground apparatus in school yards and parks. Results of these efforts

have been gratifying from the standpoint of both the physical and social welfare of children. In addition to the efforts of schools and municipalities, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and other juvenile organizations have helped to amplify the recreational advantages for youngsters old enough to join such groups. They direct the gang interest in constructive channels and have a marked influence on the moral and social development of the members.

The recreation of country children has not been so carefully developed, partly because the country child has more opportunity to be outdoors and amuse himself, partly because homogeneous groups of country children of a similar age cannot be brought together quickly and easily, and partly because rural people have not recognized the value of play and recreation. They have confused play with exercise, believing that if a child had sufficient exercise he need not play. This point of view, of course, entirely overlooks the social values involved in play; fortunately it is disappearing gradually. It is well known that play facilities of rural schools are not ample. Playground apparatus is not always provided, and the attendance in district schools is frequently so small that many kinds of games cannot be played. What, then, do country boys and girls under sixteen years of age do for recreation? It is evident that there is little opportunity to play with boys and girls of other families outside of school hours. Consequently country children must devise means of amusing themselves. Pets are a great advantage, and, certainly, a majority of country children have one or more pets. The country environment offers opportunity for free expression, such as running, jumping, whistling, collecting stones and other objects, as well as the chance to construct things with tools. Such activities probably constitute the chief play activities of farm children when they are not participating in some kind of group activity.

It appears from the small amount of information available that play facilities at home are fairly well provided for country children. In the survey of recreation in Paulding County, Ohio,

the percentage of a total of 226 children two to ten years of age possessing certain play facilities was <sup>12</sup>

FACILITY	PER CENT	FACILITY	PER CENT
Swing	74.7	Air rifle	3.9
Teeter	42.9	Toy pistol	3.0
Kiddie Kar	23.4	Mechanical toys	19.0
Sled	67.2	Tools	2.5
Skates	11.0	Tea set	30.5
Hoops	21.2	Croquet	7.5
Tennis court	.4	Wagon	65.4
Stilts	4.4	Dolls	44.2
Play house	53.5		

These facilities show evidence of the rural environment. Many of them may be provided at very little or no expense. If pets were added to this list the percentage of children having one or more pets undoubtedly would be high. A study of leisure time activities of rural children in selected areas of West Virginia shows that the children had an average of 2.6 hours daily to do as they pleased. Some typical schedules follow.<sup>13</sup>

Farm boy, 12 years of age. Works  $2\frac{3}{4}$  hours; free  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

#### A M

6:00 Rises

6:15 Waters and feeds chickens, helps milk, throws down hay at uncle's farm near by.

7:30 Breakfast.

8:00 Starts for school— $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile walk over bad roads.

#### P.M.

4:15 Arrives home from school; supper

4 30 Milks and does other chores.

6:00 Reads papers.

6:30 Studies.

7:00 Free—sits around and talks.

9:00 Bed.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, page 87

<sup>13</sup> Ella Gardner and Caroline E. Legg, *Leisure-Time Activities of Rural Children in Selected Areas of West Virginia*, United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, Publication 208.

Farm boy, 15 years of age. Works 3 hours; free  $2\frac{3}{4}$  hours.

## A.M.

- 5:30 Rises.
- 5:45 Feeds cows and horses, milks two cows.
- 6:30 Breakfast.
- 7:00 Feeds sheep and does other chores.
- 8:00 Gets ready for school.
- 8:15 Starts for school—2 miles; walks part way, takes bus part way.

## P.M.

- 4:30 Home, plays baseball.
- 5:30 Does chores.
- 6:45 Supper.
- 7:15 Studies.
- 8:15 Reads.
- 10:00 Bed.

Farm girl, 13 years of age. Works  $2\frac{3}{4}$  hours, free  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

## A.M.

- 6:00 Rises; feeds stock
- 6:30 Breakfast.
- 6:45 Packs lunches, gets little ones ready for school, tends stock.
- 8:30 Leaves for school

## P.M.

- 4:30 Arrives home; tends stock.
- 5:00 Plays.
- 5:30 Supper and dishes.
- 6:00 Studies lessons.
- 6:30 Plays; reads.
- 8:30 Bed.

Farm girl, 14 years of age. Works  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hours; free  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

## A.M.

- 7:00 Rises; milks 2 cows and feeds chickens.
- 7:30 Breakfast.
- 7:45 Washes dishes and makes bed.
- 8:15 Starts for school—1-mile walk.

## P.M.

- 4:45 Arrives home, feeds chickens, milks cows.
- 5:00 Plays.
- 6:00 Supper.
- 6:15 Washes dishes.
- 6:30 Studies.
- 7:00 Plays out of doors.
- 8:30 Bed.

Farm girl, 15 years of age. Works 3 hours; free  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour.

## A.M.

- 6:00 Rises.
- 6:15 Breakfast.
- 6:45 Does housework and barn chores.
- 7:45 Leaves for school—5-mile walk; usually catches a ride part way.

## P.M.

- 5:30 Arrives home; helps in the house.
- 6:00 Supper.
- 6:30 Milks, washes dishes
- 8:00 Studies.
- 8:30 Free.
- 9:15 Bed.

Country boy, 15 years of age.

Works  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours; free  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour. (This boy does not live on a farm, but lives in the open country near a farm, and works there.)

## - A.M.

- 7:30 Rises.
- 7:45 Breakfast.
- 8:00 Chops wood, gets in coal and water, tends furnace, gathers eggs.
- 8:30 Goes to school.

## P.M.

- 3:30 Arrives home, does some chores.
- 4:00 Goes to neighboring dairy and washes bottles.
- 5:00 Eats supper there.
- 5:30 Free.
- 6:30 Feeds cows, sometimes milks, bottles milk.
- 7:30 Studies.
- 9:00 Bed.

Nine hundred boys and 1,002 girls were included in this study. Their interests were extremely varied and furnish the foundation for a constructive recreational program as the following list shows.<sup>14</sup>

## SPECIAL INTERESTS OF BOYS

	Times Named		Times Named
Farm work (care of stock, gardening, and general farm work)	185	Visiting friends or rela- tives	12
Baseball	172	Bicycling	11
Games (all except ball)	139	Skating	9
Free-play activities (in woods, fields, with toys and animals)	95	Movies and shows	9
Hunting and trapping	93	Club work	8
Reading	92	Chemistry and scientific experiments	8
Fishing	84	Automobile riding	8
Swimming	78	Home chores	8
Carpentry and construc- tion	75	Aviation	6
Sports and athletics (not otherwise specified)	69	Music	6
Mechanics (automobile, electric, etc.)	62	Art	5
Travel and trips	41	Radio construction	5
Basketball	35	Picnics	5
Football	35	Fair or circus	4
Hiking	33	Cutting wood	4
Camping	30	Listening to radio	4
Coasting	26	Going to town	3
Work, other than farm (in mill, pottery, on roads, etc.)	24	Writing	3
Horseback riding	20	Sleeping	3
Nature and nature study	18	Just loafing	3
Driving horses	16	Tennis	2
School and study	16	Boating	2
Driving automobile	15	Church or Sunday School	2
		Eating	2
		Attending lectures	1
		"Clerking"	1
		Dancing	1
		Printing	1
		Visiting a factory	1
		No ideas	10

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 81 and 82.

## SPECIAL INTERESTS OF GIRLS

	Times Named		Times Named
Reading	263	Raising flowers	12
Sewing	188	Horseback riding	9
Games (all except ball)	172	Coasting	9
Free-play activities (in woods, fields, with toys and animals)	161	Going to town	8
Hiking	105	Dramatics and elocution	7
Music	78	Work, other than house or farm	6
Housework	78	Skating	5
Cooking	78	Handicraft	5
Farm work	67	Fishing	5
Games with ball	66	Tennis	4
Travel and trips	58	Church or Sunday School	4
Swimming	53	Entertaining company	4
Sports and athletics (not otherwise specified)	49	Driving automobile	4
Picnics	42	Lectures or plays	3
School and study	39	Recreation leadership	2
Camping	36	Socials	2
Visiting relatives or friends	32	Typing	2
Nature and nature study	24	Making candy	2
Club work	17	Social work	2
Care of children	17	Rowing	1
Movies	16	Hunting	1
Art	16	Bicycling	1
Automobile riding	16	Science	1
Dancing	14	Taking pictures	1
Writing	12	Sleeping	1
		No ideas	10

Such lists offer a challenge as well as an opportunity, for, while the facilities to develop many of these interests may be absent in the rural environment, the fact that children express an interest in them is encouraging.

The greatest weakness in the play life of the country child is the lack of group games and activities. However, at the present time boys' and girls' agricultural clubs are doing much to afford some opportunity for participation in groups. In the discussion of this subject in a previous chapter it was noted that club organizations give the children a chance to conduct meetings, plan



programs and hold camps. Other juvenile organizations, such as Sunday School classes and Boy Scouts, help to provide group activities for the farm boy and girl. To a considerable extent these organizations and the 4-H clubs are supplementary to each other, or may be made so. But at the present the 4-H clubs constitute the principal organized groups to which farm boys and girls belong. In a recent study of membership in different clubs and organizations 1,265 farm boys and 1,555 farm girls reported as follows:<sup>15</sup>

ORGANIZATION	FARM BOYS, PER CENT BELONGING	FARM GIRLS, PER CENT BELONGING
None	2	1
4-H	91	95
Boy Scouts or Camp Fire Girls	13	9
C E., Epworth League, etc	19	27
Social (local)	7	14
Other	3	2

In the future there may be a much greater development of Boy Scouts' and Camp Fire Girls' organizations in rural districts. They are found now in many small towns and may reach the farm boy or girl if their objectives can be co-ordinated in some manner with the boys' and girls' club movement so that the two organizations do not unduly compete for the time of the youngster, or, on the other hand, the boys' and girls' clubs may take on the idealistic features of the Boy Scouts' and Camp Fire Girls' and so avoid duplication of organization.

*Opportunities for Recreation in the Country*—Opportunities for recreation are so broad and varied at the present that any adult person with a reasonable amount of leisure and a lively imagination need not lack something interesting to do. This statement is true for the city also, though environmental influences do determine to a certain extent the facilities for recreation. The country is especially outstanding in the opportunities it offers for contact with nature and outdoor social events. Nature

<sup>15</sup> Reported by E. L. Kirkpatrick in *Proceedings of the Ninth National Country Life Conference*, The University of Chicago Press, page 73.

is a great source of interest for a person who appreciates her wonderful manifestations. To the mind of the country man, the soil may be so much dirt, or it may be nature's laboratory bringing forth plants of exquisite beauty. The joy and satisfaction of creation is immeasurable but is as real as the object created. The pleasure some farmers get in watching a fine field of corn grow to maturity is truly recreational, and is an experience seldom realized by the uninitiated. Each new bit of knowledge the farmer gets about soil, plant or crop, increases his opportunities for the finest kind of recreation.

For the country woman the opportunities of enjoying nature are no less ample. Aside from any practical value it may have, the garden may be a source of interest and pride to the family. It may even become a matter of sentiment. Flowers also offer an opportunity for recreation and enjoyment. The best proof that can be offered for this statement is the fact that many farm women, weary with household duties, will tenderly care for the flowers after the day's work is finished. When the story of farm life is completely written, the recreation and stimulation that comes from working with nature must find a place in it.

The farm child and youth may share in the creative work with nature. Boys' and Girls' Clubs have helped the child to appreciate the pleasure in growing objects. A fine calf, pig, or garden becomes enticingly interesting to the average farm boy, if he receives the proper amount of encouragement and instruction. Then the country offers an opportunity for collecting natural specimens of various kinds, be they butterflies, bird's eggs, or beetles. Hiking, too, brings the farm boy in contact with nature and may be a source of interest and recreation. Some persons may be inclined to think that hiking has no charm for the farm boy or girl, since they are in contact with nature anyway. But when hiking is carried on with a purpose, or when it is a game or test as in Boy Scout work, the activity is quite fascinating. The Boy Scout troops organized in rural districts are demonstrating this fact.

The rural home offers possibilities for recreation that have not always been developed fully. Among these possibilities, reading

should be listed. This is a favorite form of recreation now, but it may be extended farther, particularly in encouraging a higher percentage of various age groups to read, and in furnishing an ample selection of reading materials. At this point the services of a library and capable librarian are indispensable. Reading is a habit, and once people get started to read, the habit develops to a reasonable degree with only a meager amount of encouragement and direction.

Along with reading, story-telling and games at home may be mentioned. Telling a story in the proper manner is an art that adds much to the recreational aspects of family life. Children who are too young to read especially benefit by hearing a good story. Possibly the use of labor-saving devices in the farm house will enable the farm mother to spend some of her time in preparation for the event of story-telling around the family fireside. Interesting games, played at opportune times, greatly increase the recreational experiences of the child. They are a great bond between parents and children and do much to foster a spirit of loyalty for home and parents when unwholesome temptations outside the family circle arise. Some time spent by the family in singing or playing musical instruments is likewise a great builder of family unity and solidarity and is also recreational.

The general characteristics of rural communities in regard to recreation were mentioned in an earlier paragraph. It is evident from that discussion that many improvements in recreational facilities for rural people are desirable. It is true that commercialized forms of recreation have become established in the rural towns and villages, but these consist mainly of motion pictures, pool and billiards, baseball and public dancing. Under certain conditions and within certain limitations these activities are legitimate and desirable, but one serious limitation is that they do not provide means of active participation and opportunity for self-expression for all. The spectator at a motion picture show sits quietly in a semi-lighted room and watches the entire program. He may enjoy a baseball game on the screen, but still he does not actually play the game as one of the players. Pool and billiards, and to a less extent, dancing are available for a

relatively small proportion of the residents in a community. It becomes really a responsibility, then, for community institutions and organizations interested in community improvement to provide recreational activities that will offer opportunity for active participation for the various age and sex groups in the community.

An initial step in this direction on the part of community agencies is to provide facilities for recreation. Many rural communities lack adequate playground facilities despite the fact that land is comparatively cheap. A large well-equipped playground is necessary, and in the future every progressive community will have its playground and provide for its up-keep just as it now provides for its school and roads.

It is a significant fact that churches in rural communities have a vital relationship to the recreational activities of the people. This is true not only because the moral value of recreation is so great that no church can afford to overlook it, but also because rural people in many communities expect the church to provide activities and programs that will be at least partially recreational in nature for the people who attend. Church activities occupied an important place in the recreation of the people in South Carolina<sup>16</sup> as in fact they do all over the United States. A detailed study of meetings in twelve Michigan Communities showed that churches and their auxiliary organizations had the greatest number of meetings, and that the attendance exceeded that of any other type of agency.<sup>17</sup> The detailed nature of these meetings, in addition to the regular church services and Sunday school meetings are listed on the next page.<sup>18</sup>

The church program ordinarily appeals to all age and sex groups and especially to the children, because otherwise when the school is not in session the recreational needs of children and young people are likely to be neglected.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, pages 42-44

<sup>17</sup> C. R. Hoffer and Margaret Cawood, *Services of Institutions and Organizations in Town-Country Communities*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 208

<sup>18</sup> C. R. Hoffer, *Activities of Churches in Town-Country Communities*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 226.

NAME OF MEETING	NUMBER HELD	NAME OF MEETING	NUMBER HELD
Sunday School Party	210	Mother and Daughter	
Boy Scout Meeting	83	Banquet	4
Church Nights	66	Father and Son Banquet	2
Motion Pictures	23	Church Fair	2
Entertainment	18	Sunday School Convention	2
Concert	17	Home Talent Play	1
Choir Party	15	School Party	1
Church Conference	8	Lecture	1
County Council of Religious Education	5	Class Party	1
Athletic Contest	4	Bazaar	1
		Holy Name Society	1

A majority of public schools have already utilized their advantages for providing recreation. Athletic contests, plays and picnics are common. Opportunity for the school to develop its activities further along these lines consists, especially, in making it possible for a larger number of pupils to participate in recreational events. There is a vital difference between watching a recreational event and participating in it. When a person actively participates in certain forms of recreation the socializing effects are much greater. For the time being, at least, the participant must play a rôle befitting his part, and in doing so he becomes socialized.

The emphasis on athletics now so common in both rural and urban communities is favorable to the development of community pride and solidarity. But in many instances it is carried to excess and the results possibly do more harm than good. If the recreational program of the school consists chiefly in developing a winning team, there is great danger that the physical and recreational needs of the pupils not able to make the team will be neglected. A list of recreational activities that may be sponsored by schools would doubtless be varied. In the study of the leisure-time activities of rural children in West Virginia it was found that the recreational activities of the schools could be conveniently divided into: (1) recess play; (2) team practice; (3) social affairs planned and rehearsed to entertain parents as well as raise money for various school projects; (4) organiza-

tions, clubs, and special groups fostered either by students or by teachers.<sup>19</sup> If equipment is adequate in the sense of having playgrounds, gymnasium facilities, etc., the recreational needs of most children could be developed. It is well to remember, nevertheless, that the teacher has an important influence in this connection and that no amount of equipment will be a substitute for a teacher who understands the recreational needs of children.

The country environment offers unlimited opportunities for outdoor recreation. These opportunities may be developed and improved to some extent. Picnics are common, but many of them turn out to be chiefly a dinner eaten under a shade tree and a speech by someone from outside the community. Such events might be supplemented to advantage by games of various kinds and by stunts that will help people to become acquainted. There is often a tendency for persons attending a picnic to segregate themselves among acquaintances and thus lose some of the value for contacts afforded by such an event.

Attending county fairs, as has been noted, is a popular form of recreation for country people. The quality of this activity can be improved greatly by some well-directed home-talent events. Carnival features now furnish a large amount of the attractions at most county fairs, but such events need to be supplemented by home-talent entertainments. A pageant depicting the history of the county is an excellent addition to a county fair program. Contests and plays always interest people. Likewise, at community fairs local talent can be used with even greater effectiveness, for people are always interested in watching friends and acquaintances play, act or sing.

In thus describing the opportunities for recreation in the country, the quality of recreation is emphasized quite as much as its quantity. When recreation lacks quality its social value is diminished. If this characteristic of rural recreation can be kept at a high level, there is a much greater possibility that the farm population will remain contented, progressive, and happy. Country people need art as well as science. They need an appreciation of the beautiful as well as an appreciation of the useful.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 51-52.

It is an encouraging fact that agricultural extension departments are beginning to provide leadership in rural recreation. In Ohio, Wisconsin and Michigan home-talent plays have received much attention. Such plays provide opportunity for self-expression; local talent is discovered and, if suitable plays are chosen, the effect is decidedly socializing. The words of Mr. K. L. Hatch are particularly pertinent in this connection. He states, "Every community possesses sufficient embryonic genius to meet all its recreational needs. But commercial entertainment dominates—not only because it offers opportunity for profit but also because no one has seriously undertaken the task of identification and development of the latent talent everywhere available."<sup>20</sup> It is possible, of course, for agricultural extension departments to encourage other forms of recreation. This is being done to a considerable extent, and it is logical to expect that their efforts in recreation will be as fruitful as they have been in other lines of endeavor.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the distinctive characteristics of rural recreation?
2. How has the development of modern agriculture affected the recreation of rural people?
3. Describe the facilities for recreation which are found in rural communities.
4. What are the principal recreational facilities of farm men? Of farm women?
5. Why are the recreational facilities of young people in rural communities often unsatisfactory?
6. Compare the probable benefits of passive and active types of recreation for young people.
7. What circumstances contribute to the neglect of recreational facilities for rural children?
8. List the opportunities for recreation in the country.
9. How may church activities promote the recreation of people in rural communities?

<sup>20</sup> *Home Talent Tournaments*, Agricultural Extension Service, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, Circular 221

10. Why are home-talent plays especially valuable as a form of recreation for rural people?

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## CHAPTER XVI

### THE HEALTH OF THE RURAL POPULATION

The country environment has many advantages from the standpoint of health. There is fresh air, sunshine and fresh, wholesome food during the greater part of the year. On the other hand, some disadvantages prevail. Dangers of contamination of food and water exist, due to inadequate disposal of sewage or lack of personal hygiene. Medical facilities are not readily available in some rural districts, and if secured, are expensive. Moreover, the work of public health agencies in promoting clinics and health education is absent in many places. Quarantine measures are not strictly enforced. These circumstances create certain problems of a social nature regarding the health of rural people. They may be summarized as follows: (1) Unsanitary conditions around the premises; (2) Ineffective administration of health laws; (3) Lack of medical service; (4) Lack of hospital facilities; (5) Insufficient amount of public health education.

*Statistics of Rural Health*—The statistical analysis of health conditions in rural areas may be approached from two angles: first, from an analysis of the death rates for different diseases, and second, from a study of the sickness rate. There is a scarcity of data from either point of view pertaining strictly to the rural population. Mortality statistics in the census reports make the division between urban and rural population at 10,000. Consequently, the data for many towns and cities are included with the rural population. Nevertheless the figures suggest general trends. They show the death in rural areas (including towns and cities up to 10,000 in population) to be lower than it is for cities above 10,000 in population. The following data give the

extent of the difference in the death rate from all causes, exclusive of still-births, per 1,000 estimated population.

YEAR	CITIES IN REGISTRATION AREA (10,000 AND OVER)	RURAL PARTS OF THE REGISTRATION AREA (INCLUDING TOWNS AND CITIES UP TO 10,000 IN POPULATION)	DIFFERENCE <sup>1</sup>
1929	13.0	10.9	2.1
1928	13.3	11.0	2.3
1927	12.5	10.4	2.1
1926	13.4	11.1	2.3

These figures represent the crude rates for the entire country. The data for each state in 1929 are presented in Table XXII. In some states, namely, New Hampshire and New York, the rural death rates exceeded that of the urban population; in certain others the rates for these two population groups were practically equal.<sup>2</sup> If, however, standard rates were computed, the probabilities are that the country would show a lower death rate than the city. Certain differences occur also when the death rates for specific types of diseases are considered. Table XXIII shows the death rate per 10,000 from certain types of diseases in the rural and urban parts of the registration area.<sup>3</sup>

An examination of the data in this table shows that in only four instances is the death rate higher for the rural population of the registration area than for the urban population. These types of diseases or causes are: epidemic, endemic and infectious diseases; diseases of the nervous system; old age (senility); and ill-defined causes. The higher rate of epidemic, endemic and infectious diseases probably reflects the prevalence of unsanitary conditions in certain parts of the country and the ineffective enforcement of quarantine laws. The higher death rate from old age in the rural population is explained in a measure by a greater proportion of old persons in the country, while that of

<sup>1</sup> U S Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Mortality Statistics*, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1929.

TABLE XXII DEATH RATE (EXCLUSIVE OF STILL BIRTHS) PER 1,000  
POPULATION IN RURAL AND URBAN DISTRICTS, 1929 \*

State	Urban	Rural	Difference
Alabama	16.7	11.3	5.4
Arizona	29.0	12.9	16.1
Arkansas	19.2	9.7	1.5
California	12.1	11.5	.6
Colorado	14.6	11.2	3.4
Connecticut	11.9	10.3	1.6
Delaware	13.4	13.1	.3
Florida	13.0	12.6	.4
Georgia	17.7	10.6	7.1
Idaho	16.4	8.5	7.9
Illinois	11.8	11.4	.4
Indiana	13.1	12.5	.6
Iowa	13.9	9.1	4.8
Kansas	12.9	9.4	3.5
Kentucky	15.9	10.9	5.0
Louisiana	17.7	9.4	8.3
Maine	16.3	13.5	2.8
Maryland	14.4	12.4	2.0
Massachusetts	12.3	12.3	0
Michigan	11.9	11.6	.3
Minnesota	11.9	9.0	2.9
Mississippi	23.0	11.9	11.1
Missouri	14.5	10.6	3.9
Montana	16.3	9.0	7.3
Nebraska	13.2	8.7	4.5
Nevada	18.6	12.0	6.6
New Hampshire	13.3	14.7	— 1.4
New Jersey	12.1	10.8	1.3
New Mexico	30.0	14.4	15.6
New York	12.1	13.4	— 1.1
North Carolina	15.9	11.0	4.9
North Dakota	14.9	7.3	7.6
Ohio	12.8	11.8	1.0
Oklahoma	12.5	8.1	4.4
Oregon	13.9	9.8	4.1
Pennsylvania	13.4	11.1	2.3
Rhode Island	13.4	11.7	1.7
South Carolina	21.9	12.2	9.7
Tennessee	17.6	10.6	7.0
Utah	12.8	8.4	4.4
Vermont	16.9	14.4	2.5
Virginia	15.7	12.1	3.6
Washington	11.9	9.4	2.5
West Virginia	14.5	9.7	4.8
Wisconsin	11.6	10.0	1.6
Wyoming	11.1	8.6	2.5

\* Source of data *Mortality Statistics*, 1929.

TABLE XXIII. RURAL AND URBAN DEATH RATES PER 10,000 FROM SPECIFIED TYPES OF DISEASES IN THE REGISTRATION AREA, 1929.\*

	Urban		Rural	
	Number of Deaths	Rate	Number of Deaths	Rate
All causes	687,004	130.42	682,753	109.38
Epidemic, Endemic and Infectious diseases	86,236	16.37	120,430	19.29
General diseases not included in the above class	92,673	17.59	72,618	11.63
Diseases of Nervous System and Special Organs of Sense	61,004	11.58	74,541	11.94
Diseases of Circulatory System	147,879	28.07	128,718	20.62
Diseases of Respiratory System	66,776	12.68	53,515	8.57
Diseases of Digestive System	53,769	10.21	42,543	6.82
Non-venereal diseases of Genito-urinary system and annexa	64,744	12.29	58,367	9.35
Puerperal state	7,982	1.52	7,102	1.14
Diseases of skin and cellular tissue	1,773	.34	1,604	.26
Diseases of bones and Organs of locomotion	1,051	.20	465	.07
Malformations	6,884	1.31	6,286	1.01
Early infancy	29,195	5.54	29,305	4.69
Old age (senility)	2,620	.50	9,529	1.53
External causes	61,308	11.64	57,273	9.18
Ill-defined causes	3,110	.59	20,457	3.28

\* Source of data *Mortality Statistics*, 1929

ill-defined causes is due partly to the lack of careful diagnosis of the causes of death in rural districts. As yet it seems impossible to assign any definite reason for the higher rate of diseases of the nervous system and of the special sense organs in rural areas. These diseases include cerebral hemorrhage, paralysis without specific cause, general paralysis of the nervous system, epilepsy, and other nervous diseases.

The data concerning infant mortality rates indicate that in

1929 and 1930 the death rate of infants was higher in the rural parts of the registration area than in the urban. This is the reverse of the situation which obtained previously. It also indicates that the various organizations and agencies concerned with the conservation of infant life met with a certain degree of success, for both the urban and rural rates have tended to decline in recent years. The following figures, given in the census report dealing with infant mortality statistics, show the extent to which this is true.

Year	INFANT MORTALITY RATE	
	Urban	Rural
1923	78.4	76.1
1924	72.6	68.9
1925	73.8	71.5
1926	76.3	73.7
1927	64.7	64.4
1928	68.8	66.3
1929	65.5	67.5
1930	61.9	64.7

The cause of infant death in rural and urban areas are given in Table XXIV.

The data in this table substantiate the statement just made about the success of agencies concerned with the conservation of child life because many of the causes of death listed in the table originate in the environment. These might be eliminated through the proper development of public-health programs and a wider use of medical service. There is considerable evidence to indicate that a high infant death rate in cities occurs among the poorer classes who lack the funds to secure proper conditions for the survival of infants.<sup>4</sup>

There can be no question that facilities for infant and maternity care need to be increased in rural areas. The following statement regarding 138 cases of confinement in Cortland County, New York, are significant. "Only 41 cases, or 30%, were visited or consulted by a physician before confinement, and these

<sup>4</sup> *Causal Factors in Infant Mortality*, Publication No. 142, Children's Bureau, United States Department of Labor.

TABLE XXIV. INFANT MORTALITY RATE (DEATHS UNDER 1 YEAR OF AGE PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS) IN THE BIRTH REGISTRATION AREA OF 1917 (EXCLUSIVE OF RHODE ISLAND).\*

Cause of Death	Total	Cities	Rural
All causes	63.1	61.9	64.7
Measles	0.3	0.3	0.4
Scarlet fever	0.1		0.1
Whooping-cough	1.4	1.0	1.9
Diphtheria	0.2	0.1	0.3
Influenza and pneumonia	3.6	3.1	4.1
Dysentery	0.3	0.2	0.5
Erysipelas	0.4	0.4	0.3
Tetanus			
Tuberculosis (all forms)	0.5	0.5	0.4
Syphilis	0.7	0.9	0.5
Convulsions	0.4	0.3	0.6
Bronchitis and broncho- pneumonia	7.2	7.9	6.3
Diseases of the stomach	0.3	0.2	0.5
Diarrhea and enteritis	7.5	6.8	8.4
Congenital malformations	5.9	6.1	5.8
Congenital debility and other diseases of early infancy	4.8	4.5	5.2
Premature birth	16.8	17.2	16.3
Injury at birth	5.3	6.2	4.0
External causes	0.9	0.8	1.1
Unknown or ill-defined diseases	2.0	0.5	4.0
All other causes	4.6	5.0	4.0

\* Source of data Mortality Statistics

41 averaged 3.4 consultations per case.”<sup>5</sup> In Ross County, Ohio, “Birth statistics (taken from the birth certificates in the county office) showed that in 1924, 33 (5.7%) of the births in that county had no medical attendance. These 33 consisted of 24 (4.2%) reported by midwives and 9 (1.5%) reported by parents of the child.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Dwight Sanderson, *A Survey of Sickness in Rural Areas in Cortland County, New York*, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca, N. Y., Memoir 112, page 19.

<sup>6</sup> C. E. Lively and P. G. Beck, *The Health Facilities of Ross County, Ohio*, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 412, page 231.

It was also discovered, in a careful study of maternity care in Cattaraugus County, New York, that of the mothers who die in child-birth, only 14% have had pre-natal care, as compared with 27% of the county as a whole.<sup>7</sup> These figures and remarks apply to the so-called progressive and well advanced communities of the nation. In less progressive areas, especially among the colored population, one finds an almost unbelievable amount of superstition and magic associated with maternity and infant care. Midwifery is common, but methods based on medical science and modern health practices are unknown. The problem of maternity and infant care in rural districts seems to be a part of the general problem which exists throughout the nation. It consists in the need of an intelligent understanding of the importance of medical attention during pregnancy on the part of the public, and also an understanding and appreciation on the part of a greater percentage of physicians who treat maternity cases. The report of the President's Conference on Child Care and Protection recommends that both free and pay maternity clinics be established in connection with rural hospitals.<sup>8</sup> In view of present circumstances this is an interesting and timely suggestion.

*The Sickness Rate in Rural Areas*—The amount of sickness in a population is exceedingly difficult to determine. Some persons may be in poor health and not know it; others may think they are ill and yet a medical examination would reveal no disability. Surveyors who have tried to ascertain the amount of sickness in a given area have been forced to depend upon the statements of some member of the family regarding the amount of illness that has occurred. Obviously, a medical examination of each member of the family would be more accurate and satisfactory, but without such examinations, statements made by persons themselves have to be used.

It is the opinion of Dr. Sanderson, who made the study, that although confinements increase the sickness rate for a popula-

<sup>7</sup> C. E. A. Winslow, *Health on the Farm and in the Village*, The Macmillan Co., 1931, page 146.

<sup>8</sup> *White House Conference, 1930*, D. Appleton-Century Co., page 77.



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## A SURVEY OF SICKNESS IN CORTLAND COUNTY, NEW YORK, AMONG 2,060 PEOPLE.<sup>9</sup>

Nature of Sickness	Number of Cases	Days in Bed	Days Not in Bed	Total Days Disabled
Influenza	68	624	610	1,234
Confinements	44	528	395	923
Accidents	36	444	846	1,290
Stomach trouble	24	154	324	478
Rheumatism	23	222	515	737
Operation for removal of tonsils and adenoids	19	56	40	96
Colds	16	40	49	89
Pneumonia	14	474	232	706
Measles	14	123	157	280
Tonsilitis and sore throat	13	77	105	182
Chicken pox	12	2	90	92
Heart trouble	10	211	216	427
Appendicitis	10	231	87	318
Bronchitis or bronchial trouble	6	271	7	278
Blood poisoning	6	31	235	266
Paralysis	5	272	0	272
Asthma	5	21	57	78
Overwork or rundown con- dition	5	43	70	113
Total	330	3,824	4,035	7,859

tion, they are not an indication of ill health. If confinements are omitted from the data for sickness, a more accurate picture of the health of the population can be secured. The number of days of sickness per capita for the areas surveyed in Cortland County, New York, proved to be 4.52 in the country and 7 in the villages, when confinements were omitted.<sup>10</sup> If accidents as well as confinements are omitted, the number of days of sickness per capita becomes 4.18 for the country and 6.94 for villages.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Dwight Sanderson, *A Survey of Sickness in Rural Areas in Cortland County, New York*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Memoir 112, page 18

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, page 9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, page 9.

The higher rate in villages is probably due to differences in age groups between the village and the country population, as the study shows.

In Ross County, Ohio, a survey of 884 persons shows that 378 of them reported illnesses from one or more causes during the year previous to the time the survey was made. The causes of illness are classified as follows:<sup>12</sup>

CAUSE OF ILLNESS	PERSONS ILL
Endemic, Epidemic and Infectious Diseases	130
General Diseases not included above	27
Diseases of the Nervous System	19
Diseases of the Circulatory System	5
Diseases of the Respiratory System	57
Diseases of the Digestive Tract	52
Non-Venereal Diseases of the Genito-Urinary System and Annexa	2
Puerperal State	27
Diseases of the Skin and Cellular Tissue	9
Diseases of early infancy	1
External causes	26
Ill-defined causes	49
Total	403

Such are the data about the rate and causes of sickness in rural areas in the northern part of the United States. In the South certain diseases like malaria and hookworm are found. These diseases have done a great deal of damage in the past and are serious yet in some areas. (At one time it was estimated that one-third of the rural children in the South had hookworm.) These diseases are spread by unsanitary conditions, so, fortunately, education regarding their origin and transmission is an effective method of combating them. Malaria or hookworm reduce the efficiency of persons affected and make them more susceptible to other diseases. Through the efforts of the Rockefeller Foundation, the United States Public Health Service, and state and local public health agencies, the campaigns

<sup>12</sup> C. E. Lively and P. G. Beck, *The Health Facilities of Ross County, Ohio*. Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 412.

against hookworm have not only reduced the incidence of the disease but have reduced the severity of the cases.

*Health Defects*—Another clue to the health conditions of rural people is the presence of certain health defects. A health defect may be distinguished somewhat arbitrarily from an illness by the fact that the defect does not appear so acute or so serious in its effects. Nevertheless, a defect may develop into an illness and may lower the vitality of an individual so much that his efficiency is impaired. The results of one study of health defects among farm families appears in Table XXV.

There is no way to determine the extent to which the defects listed in this table represent conditions in other parts of the United States, as these data were derived from surveys of farm families in Tompkins County, New York. It is probable, however, that they are defects which generally exist. Messrs. Sorokin, Zimmerman and Galpin have assembled the data from numerous sources and while, as they contend, the figures do not demonstrate the superiority of either city or country children in regard to health defects, they do show without question that many preventable health defects exist among rural children.<sup>13</sup>

*Unsanitary Conditions and Law Enforcement*—After this review of data pertaining to death rates, sickness, and health defects, the social aspects of the health problem may now be considered. Unsanitary conditions exist around some farmsteads because the means of disposing of sewage are not adequate. Only a small percentage (about one-twentieth) of farm homes are equipped with modern sewage disposal systems. When not so equipped, other methods have to be used. Privies are common and are often located too close to the house. Kitchen waste is sometimes thrown in the yard, where it serves as a source of contamination and as a magnet for flies and chickens. Often barns and pig-pens are too close to the dwelling. Flies breed in the manure around the barn and will find their way into the house unless it is properly screened. Unfortunately many farm houses are unprotected by screens, and flies are numerous.

<sup>13</sup> Sorokin, Zimmerman & Galpin, *Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology*, University of Minnesota Press, Vol. III, pages 60-61.

TABLE XXV. HEALTH DEFECTS AMONG 1,827 MEMBERS OF FARM FAMILIES \*\*

Group	Number of Persons	Per Cent of Persons Who Reported—							All Teeth Lost	Three or More Health Defects
		Over- weight†	Under- weight, 10 Per Cent or More	Colds, Once or More a Year	Constipa- tion, Once a Month or Often†	"Indiges- tion," Once a Month or Often†	Head- aches, Once a Month or Often†			
Operators	518	29	15	75	24	24	18	17	58	
Homemakers	518	40	20	69	36	30	37	25	78	
Men 70 years and over *	50	52	31	70	32	22	14	50	86	
Women 70 years and over *	47	30	53	64	38	43	15	64	79	
Boys 10 to 19 years	218	8	20	76	10	5	7		27	
Girls 10 to 19 years	205	10	27	81	18	4	14		39	
Boys under 10 years	185	14	15	81	14		{ 1		22	
Girls under 10 years	147	9	18	84	22	3	{ 5		31	

\* Of these older men and women, 61 are counted also among the operators and homemakers

† Over 25 years, 10 per cent or more; under 25 years, 20 per cent or more.

‡ Measured by the use of remedies.

\*\* Source of data. Nancy B. Morey, *A Study of the Food Habits of Farm Families in Tompkins County, New York*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 563.

Unsanitary conditions do not prevail on farms only, but are also found in villages. In fact, the dangers of contamination of food and water are perhaps greater in villages unequipped with modern systems of sewage disposal than on farms, because the houses are closer together. The results of these conditions appear in the mortality rates of certain diseases, commonly classed as infectious diseases. It has been noted already that the death rate for epidemic, endemic, and infectious diseases is higher for the rural parts of the registration area than for the urban parts. This fact is shown more clearly when the death rates for certain of these diseases are considered. The rates which follow are based on deaths per 10,000 population.<sup>14</sup>

DISEASE	URBAN RATE	RURAL RATE
Typhoid and Paratyphoid	.25	.55
Malaria	.08	.58
Measles	.24	.26
Scarlet Fever	.22	.21
Whooping Cough	.52	.71
Diphtheria	.74	.58
Influenza with Pulmonary complications	2.65	4.21
Influenza (other and unspecified)	1.14	2.79
Dysentery	.11	.34
Erysipelas	.30	.21
Tuberculosis (all forms)	7.64	7.47
Tuberculosis (Respiratory system)	6.58	6.83
Tuberculosis of the Meninges, Central Nervous system	.38	.17
Tuberculosis of the Intestines, Peritoneum	.23	.20
Syphilis	1.07	.62
Septicemia	.13	.10

It is evident from the figures above that the death rate caused by typhoid and paratyphoid fever, malaria, measles, whooping cough, influenza, dysentery, and tuberculosis of the respiratory system is greater in the country than in the city. These figures appear to be no exception to the general rule, for a comparison of rural and urban death rates caused by certain diseases for the

<sup>14</sup> *Mortality Statistics*, U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1929

period 1900 to 1924 showed that the rural death rate was higher than the urban for malaria and influenza throughout the period, for typhoid fever during the years 1909 to 1924, and for tuberculosis of the respiratory tract from 1921 to 1924 inclusive.<sup>15</sup> It was found also in the survey of health facilities in Ross County, Ohio, that among the causes of illness, the epidemic-infectious group contributed most causes, the respiratory group second, and the digestive group third.<sup>16</sup>

Closely associated with the neglect in keeping the premises clean, is the lack of strict enforcement of laws relating to health and sanitation. Laws of this kind exist for rural districts, but their enforcement is in charge of a health officer who is a local resident, usually a physician. The physician probably knows the law and its importance, but if he tries to enforce it without the support of public opinion in the community he cannot be successful. Trouble results. So, in order to avoid trouble and loss of patronage, the health officer allows persons to evade the law. In rural areas relationships are more personal than they are in urban communities. It is, therefore, difficult to get strict adherence to laws that are not understood or appreciated. People think the law should not apply in their case and look upon its enforcement as an insult. The only remedy for this situation apparently is to employ a county health officer with taxation funds. He can maintain a more professional relationship and attitude when performing his duties and can enforce laws uninfluenced by personal relationships.

It is well not to lose sight of the fact, however, that sanitary conditions *can* be maintained around dwellings on farms and in villages. To do so requires a certain amount of forethought and effort, which some people are unwilling to put forth. Others neglect their duty in this respect. The principal remedy for a situation of this kind is a vigorous program of health education that will reveal the dangers of unsanitary surroundings. If

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> C E Lively and P G. Beck, *The Rural Health Facilities of Ross County, Ohio*, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 412

the educational program is effective, laws regarding sanitation and health will be observed and more easily enforced.

*Medical Service*—In many respects the amount and quality of medical services which the rural population has is the core of the health problem in rural areas. There are numerous questions involved here, and much misunderstanding and confusion exists regarding the matter. It is customary to point back to the days when the family physician went about on foot or horseback to call upon patients and dispense to them his medicine and fatherly advice. He was greatly respected and held an important position in the estimation of his people. We are told that he was not unduly concerned about pay for his services; often, if money was not available, payments were made in the form of produce which the farmers had available. People were satisfied with the service they received, and the doctor was satisfied to serve them. If the physician became too old to carry on active practice, his son or some other young man took his place. Then, seemingly, rural medical service presented no problems.

It is possible that the rôle of the old-fashioned country doctor has been over-idealized, for obviously no one knows how efficient these doctors were, judged by the practices which were then accepted as correct. At any rate the system has not remained. One evidence of the change has been the disappearance of the family physician in the smaller neighborhoods and communities. Some years ago Lewis Mayer and Leonard V. Harrison collected and tabulated some figures regarding the disappearance of the physician in the smaller areas. Their data follow:<sup>17</sup>

PLACES HAVING IN 1910 AND 1920 RESPECTIVELY A POPULATION OF	POPULATION PER PHYSICIAN (BASED ON ESTIMATED POPULATION IN AND ABOUT SUCH PLACES)	
	1906	1923
Less than 1,000	997	1,238
1,000 to 2,500	590	910
2,500 to 5,000	557	794

<sup>17</sup> Lewis Mayer and Leonard Harrison, *The Distribution of Physicians in the United States*, General Education Board, page 47.

It is evident from these calculations that the number of physicians in the smaller communities is decreasing in proportion to the population. Other studies support the same generalization. In Ohio there were, in 1914, 870 rural persons per physician. By 1931 the number had increased to 1572<sup>18</sup> Tabulations showing the number of physicians in rural trade centers in Michigan also show a decrease in the number of physicians since 1900, though the decline was proportionally smaller in 1920 to 1930 than in previous decades. The trend in a decrease of the number of physicians appears to be unmistakable, though its continuance is not so certain. The important point, however, is to evaluate whatever changes there are from the standpoint of the welfare of rural people.

It is significant to know whether the decrease in the number of rural physicians leaves some communities entirely without a resident doctor, or merely that certain communities have fewer physicians than they previously had. The author has attempted to answer this question in research work. The result of this effort warrants the statement that, generally speaking, a decrease in the number of physicians in various towns rather than the disappearance of physicians completely from the community has occurred. In Michigan in 1928 only five towns above 500 in population were without physicians. This probably was due to some exceptional circumstances, for ordinarily a town of 500 (including the population in its surrounding trade area) can support a physician.<sup>19</sup> Of 128 towns under 500 in population, 94 had one or more physicians. Thirty-four were entirely without this service. It is the opinion of the writer, however, that only when a town has less than 500 people is there a likelihood that it will be entirely without the services of a resident physician, even under present circumstances.

There are certain reasons for the decrease in the number of physicians in rural areas. In some parts of the country, and

<sup>18</sup> C. E. Lively, *Some Rural Social Agencies in Ohio*, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 529.

<sup>19</sup> C. R. Hoffer, *Public Health and Educational Services in Michigan*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 207.



especially in some communities, there has been a decline in the number of rural inhabitants. Secondly, means of transportation have been greatly improved in recent years and thus it is possible for a physician living in a rural community to see more people than he could formerly. It is also possible that physicians living in a fairly large town may serve patients in adjoining communities. Then, too, with the use of the automobile it is possible for rural people to come to the physician's office in the town.

Besides the factors just mentioned there is the problem of pay which the physicians in rural areas receive. The cost of training and maintenance of an office have increased greatly in recent years, but there has not been a corresponding increase among rural communities in pay for medical service. Some studies have been made of the income of physicians in rural communities. It is difficult to secure such information, but the results show a considerable variation and a low average net income. One study reports that in Shelby county, Indiana, where 31 physicians were practicing at the time of the study, half of the net incomes were less, and half were more, than \$3,066.<sup>20</sup> Another study shows the average net income of physicians in three representative Southern counties to be \$1,623.<sup>21</sup> In the State of Vermont the average net income of physicians was reported to be \$4,310 in 1929.<sup>22</sup> The figures are sufficient to give a general idea of the situation in regard to income. In considering these amounts one must keep in mind the necessary expenditures for medical training as well as the standard of living a physician is expected to maintain.

One very good reason for the low income of physicians in rural areas is the fact that many families do not have the money to pay for needed medical attention. Farm incomes have never

<sup>20</sup> Allon Peebles, *A Survey of the Medical Facilities of Shelby County, Indiana, 1929*, Abstract of Publication No. 6, The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care

<sup>21</sup> C. W. C. Guild, *Surveys of Medical Facilities in Three Representative Southern Counties*, Abstract of Publication No. 23, The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care.

<sup>22</sup> Allon Peebles, *A Survey of the Medical Facilities of the State of Vermont*, Abstract of Publication No. 13, The Committee on Costs of Medical Care.

been high in comparison to similar investments of capital and effort in other industries, and since the close of the World War profits for the average farm have been very low, indeed, if perchance there have happened to be any. With low incomes farmers are reluctant to spend any more than is absolutely necessary for medical services. Another factor is the tendency of farmers to postpone payment. In fact, a certain percentage, either because of inability or negligence never pay their doctor bills.

These conditions, along with the tendency toward specialization in medical practice, have caused many young physicians to locate in urban rather than rural communities. A classification of physicians in rural areas according to age would show probably that a considerable proportion of them are more than fifty years of age, although some communities do have young physicians. A detailed study of this point for physicians in Michigan gave the following percentage in each group.<sup>23</sup>

AGE GROUP	870 RURAL PHYSICIANS	606 URBAN PHYSICIANS
Not reported	3	
25-29	3	14
30-34	8	16
35-39	7	16
40-44	7	12
45-49	9	13
50-54	16	9
55-59	16	8
60-64	12	7
65-69	8	3
Over 70	11	2

While these figures do not indicate that there is a striking difference between the ages of these two groups, nevertheless a trend toward older men is noticeable in the rural group. A detailed examination of the data showed that if there were two physicians in a town, one was an old man nearly ready to retire while the other was a young man who, presumably, would

<sup>23</sup> C. R. Hoffer, *Public Health and Educational Services in Michigan*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 207, page 11

gradually take over the practice of the older one. The younger men have come recently from medical schools and are getting excellent experience while serving their community. The older men have practiced for years and expect to remain in the community as long as they are active in the profession. The older physicians will eventually retire. Then, if some of the younger ones are drawn to larger communities by the opportunity for more practice, a community which can support only one physician may be left temporarily, if not permanently, without medical service. Such a situation will be serious, because when emergencies arise a physician is needed quickly. It is both time-consuming and expensive to have a physician come from another town for an emergency, even if it is possible to secure one. In some places these exact circumstances are already acute. Frequently communities without a physician advertise their advantages and needs in medical journals, hoping thereby to secure one.

This practice suggests the question of community responsibility in securing medical service. The entire community wants a physician. Yet according to custom the fees of patients constitute his main source of income. These fees are irregular and sometimes uncollectable, because persons who are ill may be unable to pay or may be irresponsible. In any event the expense of this most vital service in the community is seldom evenly distributed and the physician is sometimes not adequately paid. Concerning the matter of distribution of expense it is of interest to note that in the study of health facilities in Ross County, Ohio, previously mentioned, analysis of the data showed that 60% of the total cost of physicians' services for 200 families visited was defrayed by twenty families. This condition is not exceptional; on the contrary, it appears to be quite general.

It would seem, therefore, that the time is at hand for communities needing a physician to think about hiring one on some basis that would insure the physician a dependable income, large enough to enable him to stay in the community, and at the same time would distribute the expense more evenly among the families in the area. Many circumstances favor such a plan. It would guarantee the presence of a physician in the community. It

might encourage a greater number of capable doctors to plan for a career of country practice. It would probably be economical for the families that participate in it. For example, three hundred families paying ten dollars each would insure an income of \$3,000 for a physician. The extent of service to be given in return for the ten-dollar contribution would have to be agreed upon, but it is not impossible to devise some plan advantageous for all concerned.<sup>24</sup>

Such a plan as has just been suggested or similar ones depend upon the initiative of the community. This is a serious limitation in some ways, because many rural communities are not sufficiently integrated to make such measures successful. Another way to meet the problem would be for the medical profession itself to take the initiative in the matter and offer to rural residents some economical and systematic plan of payment for medical service. It is to the credit of the profession that such plans have been considered and in a few instances actually presented to the people by medical societies. Even so, this is a difficult problem. Dr. A. J. McLaughlin of the United States Public Health Service makes the following pertinent remarks in this connection, "The cost of the best medical care, where available, is worth what is paid for it. The cost has not increased in greater proportion than the cost of other services; but medical, surgical, diagnostic and treatment facilities have been elaborated to include many new procedures, worth their cost, which were not included years ago. The greatest problem is not the cost but the absence of facilities for modern diagnosis and treatment at a definite known cost. It is the collective obligation of the organized medical profession to solve this great problem."<sup>25</sup>

Designated medical services at a uniform rate per family constitute the basis of the plans offered by the medical societies. This gives the family a chance to provide for the payment of a definite amount for medical service and keeps the whole plan

<sup>24</sup> Ernst Drebert, *Solving the Problem of the Country Doctor*, Rural America, February, 1926

<sup>25</sup> A. J. McLaughlin, *A Public Health Survey of Iowa*, Public Health Reports, Vol. 45, No. 28, pp. 1573-1597.

within the control and supervision of the medical group. Apparently the medical societies desire very much to inaugurate this scheme. In fact, if this is not done by the medical profession, there is a possibility that insurance companies will offer to the public a systematic plan of insurance to provide for the payment of medical services. Under any of these plans it is well to bear in mind the fact that the decision regarding their use is left with each family. It is not probable that all families would want to pay for medical service in this way though it is reasonable to expect that a majority in most communities would.

Another method of making medical service available to rural people is to offer it as a public service, the expense being met by taxation, just as roads, schools, and any other services are provided. Except in case of dependency, there are few, if any, instances in the United States where medical treatment (not public health services) is provided for families in this way. It is not desired by medical societies, and, so far, the demand of the public has not crystallized to the point where it could be adopted without the support of the medical profession. Nevertheless, there is merit in the plan if adopted under favorable conditions, and unless the medical profession can present a better method, the public support of physicians may develop. It appears to be successful in one province in Canada. This method of support, like the others discussed, provides a means whereby at least a majority of families, instead of families having the additional disadvantage of illness, contribute to the support of a service which is a community asset.

*Expenditures for Health*—At this point it is well to note that under the present system the average expenditures which farm families make are perhaps large enough to support more adequate medical service at no additional cost. But the system would have to be organized more efficiently. Reference to Table XXVI in the following chapter shows that a large proportion of the expenditures included in the budget for the standard of living are for health purposes. In terms of money this amounted to \$61.60 for the 2,886 families in different parts of

the United States.<sup>26</sup> In the case of 200 farm families in Ross County, Ohio, the average expenditure for all health purposes was \$39.25<sup>27</sup> In Cortland County, New York, the figure was \$40.81<sup>28</sup> per family and in Minnesota \$79.24.<sup>29</sup> Among 294 white land-owner operators in North Carolina the amount was \$82.00.<sup>30</sup> As previously mentioned, these expenses are not evenly distributed among the families in the various communities and often it may happen that the families least able to pay will have the largest health bills. The variation in the amount paid for medical purposes is well illustrated by some figures pertaining to 1,323 Vermont families which included only a comparatively small number of urban families. Forty-three of the families paid nothing for medical purposes. The detailed figures for the others follow.<sup>31</sup>

FAMILY EXPENDITURE	FAMILIES	
	Cumulative Number	Cumulative Per Cent
More than \$1	1280	97
5 to 10	1176	89
10 to 15	1051	79
15 to 20	937	71
20 to 30	829	63
30 to 40	662	50
40 to 50	552	42
50 to 100	478	36
100 to 150	225	17
150 to 200	138	10
200 to 250	86	6
250 to 300	66	5
300 to 400	46	3
400 to 500	32	2
500 and over	18	1

<sup>26</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, United States Department of Agriculture, Bulletin 1466

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, page 34

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, page 27

<sup>29</sup> C. C. Zimmerman and J. D. Black, *How Minnesota Farm Incomes Are Spent*, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 234

<sup>30</sup> W. A. Anderson, *Living Conditions Among White Land-Owner Operators in Wake County*, North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 258

<sup>31</sup> Allon Peebles, *A Survey of the Medical Facilities of the State of Vermont*, Abstract of Publication No. 13, The Committee on Costs of Medical Care,

Medical service is apt to be especially high for farmers, due partly to the distance that the physician must travel in reaching the patient. Many physicians make an extra charge, varying from fifty cents to one dollar per mile, for mileage on country calls. Thus, if a family lives six miles from town, three dollars and possibly six, will be added to the regular charge for the visit. These rates seem high and often unreasonable to farm people, yet there are certain facts to be kept in mind before accusing a physician of over-charging. Transportation costs are high because calls are most frequent at a time of year when roads are likely to be bad. Secondly, if a family lacks funds or is irresponsible, there is danger that the fee will never be paid, or paid only after a considerable period of time has elapsed. Then the physician may lose several calls of patients who come to his office while he is out in the country. All of these circumstances need to be considered in understanding and evaluating the cost of medical service in the country. The high charge for medical service, combined with low income and an attitude of frugality possessed by many farm people, explains to a considerable extent why they hesitate to call a physician unless it is necessary beyond a question of doubt. There seems to be little possibility of reducing the expense of medical service for rural families unless some co-operative plan of support for physicians is utilized.

There has been some agitation among farm people urging medical schools to modify their training for physicians who are to practice in the country. The agitation is based on the belief that if the period of medical training is shortened, more students will enroll in the course and the supply of physicians will be increased. This suggestion is faulty, because it would certainly result in turning out a large number of insufficiently trained physicians. Medical science is constantly advancing. It would be folly if the latest developments were not at the disposal of rural physicians. Moreover, if shorter periods of training prevailed, there is no assurance that graduates would practice in the country. They might prefer, even with less training, to remain in the city. Efforts of rural people spent in getting

communities to hire physicians on some kind of a co-operative basis will do far more to solve the problem of medical service in the country than efforts which seek to reduce the training of physicians. In fact, the latter course might not solve the problem at all.

The question of making specialized medical service available to rural people is a difficult one. It requires more inhabitants than a small town and its surrounding rural territory possess to support physicians who specialize in the various branches of medical practice. Probably it requires a town of approximately 5,000, together with the people in the area around it, to support an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist. Undoubtedly an equal population would be needed to support a skilled surgeon. At the present time it appears that the only course left for people in rural communities needing specialists is to go where these specialists are. Possibly if hospitals serving approximately 10,000 people become more common in rural districts, some specialists could advantageously reside in the town where the hospital is located. Until these institutions are available two steps seem to be necessary and advisable: (1) urge and train general practitioners in rural communities to send patients to specialists when circumstances seem to warrant it, and (2) impress rural people with the necessity of going to specialists. This is an age of specialization, and it is impossible for one man to be a specialist in all branches of medical practice. The general practitioner resembling the old type of family doctor can be of service to the community, but he cannot take the place of specialists.<sup>82</sup>

*Hospital Facilities*—Hospital facilities are essential in a well-developed health program. They are an accepted fact in cities, but are not found so generally in rural districts. Yet they are needed by rural people just as they are by urban people. Gradually this fact is being realized. The amount of money raised in recent years for hospitals in many small town and country communities, both in large gifts and popular subscriptions, is ample proof that the idea is taking root. It is necessary now to

<sup>82</sup> George E. Vincent, *The Doctor and the Changing Order*, Survey, Vol. LV, pages 409 to 411



find plans by which hospital facilities can be supplied efficiently. This problem is particularly important in rural areas, because with a comparatively low density of population it is not possible to support an adequately equipped hospital in every community. It is estimated that a thirty to fifty bed hospital is about the smallest unit that can be administered economically.<sup>33</sup> The number of people required per hospital bed has been estimated to be from 250 to 500. Consequently a population of eight or ten thousand is needed to support the ordinary hospital. In many places the county has proven to be a satisfactory territorial unit for the support of a hospital, and seventeen states have passed laws permitting the people to erect county hospitals with money secured by taxation.<sup>34</sup> However, laws in most states provide directly or indirectly for such activity on the part of townships and incorporated towns. The most serious handicap of many of these units is insufficient population. Inter-county support is therefore necessary. Since travel in an automobile or an ambulance is now possible in rural sections, the chief limitation of inter-community or inter-county support for hospitals appears to be the lack of a co-operative attitude and technique on the part of people living in different communities. Certainly a distance of twenty-five miles would not make hospital facilities inaccessible.

There are, of course, many hospitals in rural areas that have less than a dozen beds. These are often large dwelling houses which have been remodeled for hospital services; they are usually owned and managed by a physician in the community. They are called "hospitals" by residents of the community, but they offer only limited hospital facilities. However, these places can be considered more properly as adjuncts to a larger, modern, well-equipped hospital rather than as substitutes for it.

There is much confusion in the minds of people at the present time regarding the financial aspects of hospitalization. The question is especially important in rural districts where people are

<sup>33</sup> Henry J. Southmayd, *Building Rural Hospitals*, Rural America, Vol. VI, June, 1928

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, page 7.

scattered and the sources of funds limited. There are, however, a few basic facts which need to be understood in this connection. First, it is unwise to build a hospital that is larger than the population in the immediate and surrounding communities can support. Sometimes communities have been given hospitals and then in order to maintain them have been obliged to charge rates so high that many people could not patronize them. Certainly there should be at least 250 people per hospital bed. Secondly, if the rates for hospital services are within the reasonable capacity of the people to pay, it is possible that an increasing proportion of the people who can benefit by being cared for at the hospital will do so. This has been the experience of many communities which have provided hospital services at moderate rates. The third principle to remember in providing for hospitals is the fact that the success of a hospital in a community depends upon co-operative endeavor, regardless of who owns the hospital property. One family or even a small group of families cannot support a hospital. It is a community service and merits the support of the entire community. A systematic way to provide this support, at least in part, is through taxation. Most counties in rural areas with enough people to warrant building a hospital will have sufficient taxable property so that an assessment of one mill will insure adequate hospital support, assuming of course that fees from patients and other funds will supplement the income of the hospital. Under ordinary circumstances the cost of hospital service does not exceed the financial limitations of people. The basic problem is to get enough people in one community, or in adjoining communities, who are willing to work together in supporting such an institution.

*Public Health Education*—Education regarding health matters constitutes the most effective approach in a program designed to improve the health of the population. The agencies that are likely to be most important in this connection are: (1) public health officers, (2) public health nurses, (3) the public schools through instruction in health education, and (4) the various means of adult education.

In many parts of the United States the duties of the public

health officer are performed by a local physician, who is paid a small stipend for his services. It is lawful, however, in some states for the supervisor of the township to act in this capacity if he does not deem it wise to appoint a local physician. Under such a plan there may be a dozen, or even two dozen, health officers in a county, but no one of them will be giving full time to this work. The result is that in many cases the routine work of law enforcement, observing quarantine laws for instance, is improperly done and no systematic effort is made in public health education. Experts in rural health problems are convinced that the most satisfactory and effective method of correcting these conditions is to employ county health officers on a whole-time basis in connection with county health units. Such a unit consists of a health officer who should be a licensed physician with special training in public health, one or more public health nurses, an office secretary and, if the county is large, a sanitary engineer. The minimum expense for such a unit would be approximately \$10,000. This may seem like a large sum. But when considered in relation to the benefits received it is a very economical expenditure. Prevention of ill health is always more economical than ill health and it is the primary purpose of a county health unit to prevent ill health. If such a unit is considered, the question of what will happen to the public health officers already in existence may be raised. The usual result is that they will become quiescent, as indeed they now are to a considerable extent.

The accompanying chart (Chart I) shows in a graphic way the extent of county health units in the United States in 1932. While it is true that there has been a gradual increase in the total number since 1928 and that in every state but one at least one county has this service, the high percentage of the rural population without this service is appalling. Unquestionably something must be done to hasten the adoption of county health units, or it will be generations before the entire rural population is provided with this service.

Up to the present time the expenses of health units are met by local health units and by one or more of the following

NUMBER OF WHOLE-TIME COUNTY HEALTH UNITS, BY STATES, 1928-1932, AND  
PERCENTAGE OF RURAL POPULATION SERVED AS OF JANUARY 1, 1932 \*

STATE	WHOLE-TIME COUNTY OR LOCAL DISTRICT HEALTH UNITS JANUARY 1					PERCENTAGE OF RURAL POPULATION SERVED AS OF JANUARY 1, 1932.										
	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	%	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
DELAWARE	3	3	3	3	3	100.0										
MARYLAND	8	9	11	14	16	87.5										
ALABAMA	33	50	51	54	54	85.6										
KENTUCKY	32	39	45	43	81	71.1										
S. CAROLINA	16	20	23	23	24	63.0										
OHIO	47	45	46	46	46	62.5										
ARIZONA	3	3	3	6	5	60.4										
LOUISIANA	28	29	31	31	32	57.7										
TENNESSEE	17	23	38	42	43	53.2										
N. CAROLINA	37	39	38	39	36	51.9										
WEST VIRGINIA	14	14	15	16	20	49.0										
ARKANSAS	21	24	21	24	30	48.7										
CALIFORNIA	9	11	12	13	14	48.0										
OREGON	7	7	7	8	8	47.2										
WASHINGTON	7	7	8	8	8	44.2										
MISSISSIPPI	24	29	28	28	29	42.4										
VIRGINIA	14	16	17	26	27	36.1										
GEORGIA	27	31	34	30	35	29.4										
NEW MEXICO	8	7	7	8	6	27.4										
MICHIGAN	0	3	4	24	25	27.1										
MISSOURI	14	12	13	13	11	21.9										
OKLAHOMA	9	10	9	9	9	20.1										
KANSAS	10	10	11	12	10	15.1										
MASSACHUSETTS	1	1	1	1	3	14.6										
NEW YORK	1	2	4	4	4	12.9										
PENNSYLVANIA	0	0	0	3	3	12.3										
UTAH	5	3	3	2	2	12.3										
MAINE	4	4	4	4	6	9.9										
MONTANA	3	3	4	4	4	9.9										
IDAHO	0	0	2	1	1	6.7										
TEXAS	4	4	6	7	9	6.1										
CONNECTICUT	1	1	1	1	1	3.6										
MINNESOTA	1	1	1	1	1	3.7										
IOWA	0	0	0	2	3	3.3										
FLORIDA	3	3	2	3	2	3.2										
COLORADO	1	1	1	1	1	2.6										
S. DAKOTA	1	1	1	1	1	1.6										
ILLINOIS	3	4	2	2	1	1.3										
WYOMING	1	1	0	0	0	0.0										
TOTAL	417	470	507	557	616	29.7										

\* Source, *Public Health Reports*, Vol. 47.

agencies: state health departments, U. S. Public Health Service, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Rosenwald Fund, Commonwealth Fund, The Children's Fund of Michigan, and Women's Hospital Fund.<sup>35</sup> The aim of the state and national agencies is to make the work a demonstration of what can be accomplished in the prevention and control of disease, and in health education. As these demonstrations are carried on and the value of the work demonstrated, it is hoped that some plan may be worked out whereby federal and state governments can permanently contribute to county health departments, provided county appropriations will at least equal federal and state funds for such work. The justification for this hope is the fact that ill health is not a problem that can be confined to one particular area. It is a social problem which affects the destiny of a state and nation no matter where it occurs.

The work of a county health department is varied. It consists of public lectures, physical examinations of school children, infants and adults, home visits in the interest of better health, vaccinations, etc. The practicability and feasibility of this work are shown by the fact that the number of counties installing such a department has increased year by year, and that few counties give up the plan after it is adopted.<sup>36</sup> The initial expense may seem high, yet when figured on a per capita basis or on the amount per thousand dollars of taxable property, it is not great. The average co-operative demonstration project is conducted on a cost basis of less than fifty cents per capita of population served.<sup>37</sup>

It is both interesting and important to calculate the cash value of programs designed to improve the well-being of the population, and, if accurate records are kept, some approximations can be made. For example, such an attempt was made in summarizing the benefits of an experiment of an adequate health program in Cattaraugus County, New York. Figuring the life capital of

<sup>35</sup> *Public Health Reports*, Vol. XLVII, No. 51, p. 2313.

<sup>36</sup> *Public Health Reports*, United States Public Health Service, Vol. XLI, No. 19, May 7, 1926.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XLII, No. 42, October 21, 1927.

persons saved from death by tuberculosis, diphtheria, and diseases of early infancy a total of \$300,000 is attained<sup>38</sup> This sum is twice the amount spent in carrying out the program It is misleading, however, as this report suggests, to determine the value of a health program entirely on the basis of financial returns. There are other benefits, such as increased efficiency of the population, more satisfaction in living, freedom from handicaps and numerous other advantages which should receive consideration.

The work of the county public health nurse is more generally established than that of county health officers It is primarily educational in character and is often the only means of providing health education for rural people. The work is varied but includes instructive visits to homes and schools, the planning of several kinds of clinics, some nursing care visits, lectures and publicity work. It costs, on the average, \$2,500 to \$3,000 to maintain a public health nurse in a county. This expense, as in the case of the county health department, may seem large, but if it is figured on the basis of the cost per \$1,000 of taxable property, it is small The work of county public health nurses parallels, to a certain extent, the work of public school nurses in cities. Cities having medical facilities close at hand find this service desirable. Standards in regard to the adequacy of public health services are not available It seems logical to assume that one public health nurse per 5,000 inhabitants is necessary. It is unquestionably true that if the number of persons per nurse is too large, effective work cannot be done for the entire group.

The rôle of the school in public health education is well known The development and conservation of health is one of the basic aims of education. Anything which will help to create an understanding of the principles of good health and their application in practice is advantageous. Certainly, throughout the school curricula the principles of good health can be emphasized, for, in almost all subjects the teacher can make some application to health principles.

<sup>38</sup> C E A Winslow, *Health on the Farm and in the Village*, The Macmillan Co., 1931, page 226.

Health habits and personal hygiene should also be stressed, as knowledge of principles only is insufficient. The White House Conference on Child Health and Protection lists the following projects as essential in an adequate school health service. The Summer Round-up; Periodic Health Examination; Daily Health Inspection, Weighing; Immunization; Dental Care; The School Lunch; and Guidance Program.<sup>39</sup> These projects are undoubtedly designed for urban communities as well as rural. When present practices are compared with these standards, it is evident that considerable progress has still to be made in the health programs sponsored by the schools.

Adult education in matters of health is extremely varied. It may consist of classes of adults organized for systematic instruction in regard to health, or it may be the intermittent reading of articles about health on the editorial page of the newspaper. Nevertheless, such education is extremely important, because eventually all programs and practices in health matters must have the approval of the public. At the present time people are in a confused state of mind regarding health matters. Many old theories and beliefs have been discredited by medical science. Lacking these, people do not know what to accept of the exaggerated claims, often made through advertising, for the newer methods. Patent medicine advertisements of various kinds still occupy space in newspapers, and medical practices and beliefs which are almost superstitions persist among people who think quite progressively on other matters.

It is fortunate, therefore, that the United States Public Health Service and the State Departments of Health do publish and circulate bulletins and pamphlets which inform the people in an intelligent way about health matters. Authentic newspaper articles are helpful also because they can carry timely information and advice to readers; the same statement may be made regarding articles in the better magazines and periodicals. Such articles can do much to offset the false impressions gained by

<sup>39</sup> *White House Conference, 1930*, D. Appleton-Century Co., page 172.

emotional appeals from advertisements of patent medicines in papers, periodicals and in radio broadcasts.

Perhaps the most effective method that can be used in health education is the demonstration. This method is sound in principle and if correctly planned usually brings results. It puts health practices into actual operation and does so within the reach of people so they may observe its benefits. This method has been used for years by the United States Public Health Service and by foundations interested in the improvement of public health practices. It has been very effective in showing the value of county health units, for very few counties have ceased to support the plan after a demonstration has been made. The demonstration in Cattaraugus County, New York, sponsored by the Milbank Memorial Fund and the Child Health demonstration financed by the Commonwealth Fund confirm the need, as well as the responsiveness, of communities to carefully planned demonstrations.<sup>40</sup>

In describing the work of agencies promoting health education the writer does not intend to minimize the importance of the physician. Present circumstances furnish little justification for the belief that the work of county health departments, county public health nurses, or other public health workers will ever obviate the necessity of a physician. In fact, their work may have just the opposite effect, because it will teach people to appreciate the importance of adequate medical aid, and will enable them to co-operate intelligently with the physicians who give it.

*Mental Health*—In considering the health of rural people, some mention should be made of mental ill health. This term, as used here, refers to the inability of people adequately to comprehend and adjust themselves to their environment, because of mental defects. Such inability may be caused either by mental deficiencies or by mental disorders. No one knows to what extent mental deficiency (feeble-mindedness) exists in rural

<sup>40</sup> For a detailed description of these demonstrations, see, C E A Winslow, *Health on the Farm and in the Village*, The Macmillan Co., 1931, and Courtenay Dinwiddie, *Child Health and the Community*, The Commonwealth Fund, 1931.



areas, because the methods of testing it have never been applied to a sufficient number of rural people to warrant the formation of definite conclusions. A general presumption exists that there is more feeble-mindedness in the country than in the city, though the number of first admissions to institutions for feeble-minded per 100,000 population of the same environment, was found to be 8.5 for the urban population and 4.4 for the rural population in 1922. Also the rate of first admissions to institutions for epileptics during the same year was 1.7 for the urban and 0.6 for the rural population <sup>41</sup>

Two circumstances may explain the inconsistency between the general impression regarding the comparative amount of feeble-mindedness in the country and city and the figures just quoted. First, country people may be more inclined than city people to keep a feeble-minded person at home, even though his or her mental condition warrants institutional care. Family ties and traditions are strong in the country. The rural family is separated to some extent from neighboring families and there is more room space in the house. These conditions favor the retention of a feeble-minded or epileptic person in the home. Also, the neighbors who might be instrumental in sending the patient to an institution are apt to be guided by sympathy for the feelings of the family rather than by principles of wise philanthropy.

A second circumstance creating the general impression that more feeble-mindedness exists in the country than in the city, is the fact that in certain rural communities an unusual amount of feeble-mindedness exists. These are usually those isolated places where inbreeding is favored and where the mentally deficient are protected from competition with more capable groups. Such communities exist in every state to a greater or lesser degree, but they are the exception and not the rule. It is wrong to infer that these represent general conditions in the country. Until more data are available the question of the proportion of feeble-minded in the country and in the city must be held in abeyance. But one thing is certain, improvements in personal health and medical care of the rural population will

<sup>41</sup> *Feeble-minded and Epileptics in Institutions, 1923*, Bureau of Census, 1926.

undoubtedly reduce the amount of feeble-mindedness in rural districts, because some causes of feeble-mindedness are due to unfavorable circumstances in the environment

The report of the Bureau of Census concerning patients admitted to hospitals for mental diseases in 1922, states that the general average rate (of insanity) per 100,000 of population in urban districts was found to be 78.8 and in rural districts 41.1; the rate for males in urban districts 89.6; in rural districts 46.4; the rate for females in urban districts 67.8 and in rural districts 35.5.<sup>42</sup> Not only is the general average rate higher for urban than for rural districts,<sup>43</sup> but it is higher for each class of psychoses excepting the psychoses with pellagra, which is unimportant.<sup>44</sup> It appears from these data that the country environment is less apt to produce mental disorders than is the urban environment. It is impossible to go back of these figures to tell whether proportionally more rural than urban people with mental troubles are outside of institutions, for as was pointed out in connection with the discussion of feeble-mindedness, there may be greater hesitancy on the part of rural people in sending relatives to institutions for the insane. It seems logical to assume, however, that if persons with mental troubles are kept at home, or perhaps in almshouses, the psychoses is not serious in the sense that the person is dangerous. The great disadvantage of caring for patients at home is the fact that it deprives them of medical attention that might induce recovery. Clinics for the diagnosis of mental troubles are common in cities, but in rural districts they are usually absent.

While there are apparently fewer mental disorders in the country than in the city, there is need for instruction in mental hygiene. Anyone who comes in close contact with rural people knows the heart aches and worries that grow out of bad mental habits. Warped personalities and anti-social actions are the result. An increased number of wholesome contacts cannot

<sup>42</sup> *Patients in Hospitals for Mental Diseases, 1923*, Bureau of Census, page 37.

<sup>43</sup> "Rural" includes towns up to 2,500 in population

<sup>44</sup> "The insignificance of this group is seen by the fact that it constitutes less than one percent of the total." *Patients in Hospitals for Mental Diseases, 1923*, Bureau of Census, page 49.

socialize a person who, due to bad mental habits, misinterprets their meaning and value. Suicides are not uncommon in the country, and even though the rate for cities is higher in most sections of the United States,<sup>45</sup> the number of rural suicides indicates a serious lack of mental balance and normal adjustments. The country environment is conducive to peace, quietness and contentment. Mental stresses and strains are less numerous and perhaps less severe than in the city, but it takes a healthy mind to see these advantages.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What advantages does the country environment have from the standpoint of good health?
2. What types of disease appear to be more frequent in the rural parts of the registration area than in the urban parts?
3. Discuss the adequacy of the facilities for infant and maternal care in rural districts.
4. Why is it difficult to determine the sickness rate of a rural area?
5. What health defects frequently appear in rural districts?
6. Why are unsanitary conditions likely to exist in rural communities?
7. Why is it especially difficult to enforce sanitary regulations and quarantine laws in rural communities?
8. What changes have occurred in the number of physicians in rural communities?
9. List the circumstances which seem to be responsible for these changes.
10. In what manner may a community provide for, or be provided with, the services of a physician?
11. What are the average expenditures for health made by farm families?
12. How are the actual expenses distributed among families in the community?
13. What basic facts need to be understood in connection with the financial support of hospitals?

<sup>45</sup> *Mortality Statistics, 1925*, U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

14. Evaluate the work of the local health officer in public health activities.
15. Describe briefly the organization and activities of a county health unit.
16. What are the essentials of an adequate school health service?
17. List the means that are ordinarily used in promoting health education among adults
18. What facts do census data show regarding the rate of feeble-mindedness in rural and urban districts?
19. Enumerate the circumstances which tend to create the impression that feeble-mindedness is more common in the country than in the city.
20. Compare the rural and urban environment from the standpoint of mental health.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING

"Standard of living" is a very broad and inclusive term. Almost any kind of phenomena may affect it in one way or another. Its meaning is not always definite, but is largely determined by the point of view that a particular writer or research worker has. Two trends in the usage of the term can be noted. First, standard of living may be thought of as an ideal or model way of living. The ideal includes everything considered desirable by people, who, through training and experience, feel competent to make such valuations. The second meaning of standard of living is one in which the term denotes a sort of an average, or a standard, in somewhat the same way that a standard article of merchandise meets all the ordinary requirements of quality and durability. Numerous definitions have been arrived at for the standard of living. Generally, in these definitions, the utilization of goods and services, as well as the ideals which people have in regard to their living, is emphasized. The following definition is comprehensive in scope and appears to include both material and psychic elements. "A standard of living, then, is a set of values—goods and services, economic and non-economic. It is made up of those values which are taken for granted or are insisted upon, and for the securing or maintenance of which active efforts and sacrifices will be undertaken."<sup>1</sup> Dr. E. L. Kirkpatrick, who has made extensive studies of the standard of living, presents the following as a useful, practical definition. "This term (Standard of Living) refers to the variety, quantity and quality of goods used to meet the physical and psychic, both personal and social, needs of different members composing the

<sup>1</sup> Thomas D. Eliot, *American Standards and Planes of Living*, Ginn & Co., 1931, page 3.

family, or group of families on the average.”<sup>2</sup> The use of this concept in social science has developed as a device to appraise rather quickly the status of different groups in society as well as to compare the families in one group with those in another.

*Elements in the Standard of Living*—At least three elements are fundamental in the consideration of standard of living. The first is cost. It refers to the amount of money a family or group of families spends for living. Most studies of the standard of living up to the present time have dealt primarily with cost, and really are *cost of living* studies. For many purposes cost, expressed in terms of dollars and cents, is a very effective indication of the standard of living. One advantage is that such a measure is quantitative and therefore definite. With it comparisons can be made readily. The limitation of cost as an index of the standard of living is these: the price level changes from time to time and hence it is difficult to make comparisons covering long periods of time; second and more serious, perhaps, many items or influences which appear to affect the standard of living in a marked degree cannot be satisfactorily expressed in monetary terms. The limitations, however, do not offset the advantages of an analysis from the standpoint of cost. Consequently more studies have been made of the standard of living from this point of view than from any other.

The second element to be considered under standard of living is the amount of goods and services used by any particular family or group of families. This phase of the standard of living has been called the level of living. Size of dwelling, amount and kinds of food used, amount of leisure time, etc., are included in this category. It is thus evident that many items are included in the level of living, even when only material goods are considered. It is difficult, therefore, to make studies from this approach which will throw light on the standard of living. It may be possible to select certain goods or services as indicative of the standard of living. Dr. F. S. Chapin has used the living-room for detailed study in determining the status of urban

<sup>2</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, D. Appleton-Century Co., 1929, page 15.

families and the method shows considerable promise. It would seem that the principle involved in this method could be applied equally as well to rural families. Dr. E. L. Kirkpatrick has attempted to rate the standard of living of farm families by observation of such factors as appearance of the house. He finds that, while the method is not sufficiently exact for scientific research, it may be used to get an approximation of the standard of living.

There are some aspects of the rural environment which distinctly affect the standard of living. One is the freedom from crowded conditions in cities. This freedom is obvious and is desired by most people. Urban families put forth great effort to secure it. Another advantage is outdoor life, made possible by residence in the country. The air is just as pure and the sunshine just as bright around a humble farm residence as it is around the mansion on a country estate. These and other similar advantages are so important that it is almost impossible to make accurate comparisons between the level of living in the city and in the country. The rural environment has many natural advantages that can be attained only at large expense, if at all, in the cities.

A third element basic to an understanding of the standard of living is the efficiency of living. This refers to the degree of success a family or group of families attains in the use of available money, goods, and time, to promote what they consider their well-being. Obviously, studies of this aspect of the standard of living are difficult but nevertheless important. It is a lucrative field for research just now. Fortunately a study of the buying habits of 368 farm families in New York state has appeared which demonstrates in a way the significance of studies from this standpoint.<sup>3</sup> The study shows that small households with large capital and income spend more per capita for food than large families with small capital and income, but the average was not representative of the difference between the families. Some families, even though they were financially well off, bought

<sup>3</sup> Marion Fish, *Buying for the Household*, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 561.



carefully and wisely and thus kept the per capita cost of food comparatively low. The study showed also that the activities of the housewife or family in producing home-grown foods had a decided influence on expenditures. The report reads, "families who spent money instead of labor and time for the processing of food, spent four times as many dollars per capita for food purchases as did the group who gave the labor and time." It was also noted in the study that the method of buying, i e, whether in large or small amounts, the brand and grade selected, etc., were significant in determining the cost of food. "Whether", the report continues, "a family's index of food prices was high or low depended upon the prices which they paid for meats, fruits, and vegetables. Most of the families paid about the same price for the staple foods and the fats." <sup>4</sup> Differences were noted in the purchases of clothing and other articles.

It is evident that efficient purchasing is a real problem for the modern family. Caution in this respect may change the level of living from a mere subsistence level to at least a minimum comfort level. It is also true that the manner in which an article is used affects to a significant degree the level of living. Dr. Elmer in his book, *Family Adjustment and Social Change*, cites an example of a family that after much effort in saving purchased a long-desired chair. A few weeks later it had almost been ruined. Cushions had been burned with cigarette stubs and the wicker back had been broken by the children's shoes <sup>5</sup> Every experienced landlord knows, too, that some families can practically ruin a house in six months, whereas other families will occupy it for years and cause only the ordinary amount of wear.

It follows from these statements that the standard of living must mean the net result of cost, level, and efficiency of living. That is, it represents the way a family or group of families actually lives, and it can be understood and measured chiefly

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, page 80

<sup>5</sup> M C Elmer, *Family Adjustment and Social Change*, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1932, page 275.

through a study and analysis of these categories.<sup>6</sup> Variation in rural standards of living is great. Income, type of farm, size of farm, place of residence, size of family, and community customs are a few of the factors that cause standards of living to be dissimilar. In fact, variations are so numerous that only general statements about the requirements of food, housing and other physical necessities for the entire population are possible. Studies of the standard of living for special groups, like occupational groups, give a more exact picture of how their members live. But variation exists even among families belonging to the same occupational group. This is illustrated in the case of those farmers whose standards of living have been widely studied.

*Cost of Living*—The most extensive studies of the cost of living for rural families have been made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, in co-operation with several Agricultural Experiment Stations. It is reported in a bulletin issued by this department<sup>7</sup> that the average total value of goods used by a farm family is

ITEM	TOTAL VALUE	VALUE FURNISHED BY FARM
Food	\$658 80	\$440.70
Clothing	234 90	
Rent	199 60	199 60
Operation Goods	213.10	43 40 (fuel)
Advancement	104.80	
Maintenance of Health	61 60	
Furniture and Furnishings	40 20	
Personal Goods	41.00	
Insurance, Life and Health	40 80	
Unclassified	2.70	

<sup>6</sup> Methodological note. Some writers include psychic satisfactions of various kinds, with the standard of living. These satisfactions cannot be measured, however, except as they are expressed through the cost, level, or efficiency of living. It is the belief of the writer that psychic satisfactions which are immeasurable can be more adequately and successfully considered under the concept "standard of life." The relationship between standard of living and standard of life is discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

<sup>7</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin 1466,

\$1,597.50. This average is based on the records secured from 2,886 farm homes in selected localities in eleven states during the period from 1922 to 1924. The size of the average household was 4.8 persons, and of the average family 4.4 persons. The farm furnished \$683.70, of the total expense. The following figures show the distribution of the amount spent for different items in the budget, and the amount of each furnished by the farm.<sup>8</sup>

Later studies exhibit the same general facts about the standard of living, namely, the cost of living usually fluctuates from \$1,500 to \$2,000, depending upon the size of the family, the amount and quality of goods purchased, and the prevailing level of prices. There is also a fairly constant relationship in the proportion of the amount spent for the different items. Figures in Table XXVI give the results of later studies in different states regarding the cost of living and the distribution of the amount spent among the different items.

Some comments on these data may be made. It is evident that the farm furnishes an appreciable proportion of the total expense for living. All of the rent and a large part of the fuel and food come from the farm. Here is ample statistical proof of the fact that a living can be secured, if a family lives on the farm. Farm families are not so likely to be in want as are laboring classes in the city, because two necessities of life, food and housing, are supplied in a large measure by the farm. The second point to be noted is that, although the farm furnishes a large proportion of the necessities of life, the average family spends in addition a considerable amount for living expenses. Unless a farm produces an income of at least \$75 per month, the farm family must depend on other sources for living expenses. These figures also give some indication of the purchases made by farm people. In 1930 there were 6,288,648 farms in the United States,<sup>9</sup> and while there is no way to tell whether the families living on them spent as much per family as the 2,886 listed on page 368, still the figure \$913.80, is probably fairly

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 14 and 16.

<sup>9</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. III, Agriculture.

TABLE XXVI PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURES FOR DIFFERENT ITEMS IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING BY FAMILIES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES

Area	No of Fam- ilies	Size of Family	Size of House- hold	Total Value	Food	Rent	Cloth- ing	Fur- nish- ings	Oper- ating Goods	Health	Ad- vance- ment	Per- sonal	Ins. Life Health	Un- classi- fied
Dane County, Wisconsin <sup>1</sup>	150	4.4	5.2	\$1629	31.7	17.9	15.0	4.1	12.9	5.4	6.6	3.2	1.9	.
Green County, Wisconsin <sup>1</sup>	143	4.1	4.6	\$1652	30.8	16.8	12.4	4.9	15.4	5.4	6.0	3.7	3.1	.
Faulkner County, Arkansas <sup>2</sup>				\$1085	52.3	10.0	12.4	6.1		3.9	3.9	2.0	1.4	
Minnesota, Farm & Village Families <sup>3</sup>	395	4.2			20.0		11.0			4.0				.
North Dakota <sup>4</sup>	45		5.3	\$1305	34.3	17.2	9.3	2.1	10.7	2.8	7.2	4.7	5.5	1.4
Village Families, Crozet, Va. <sup>5</sup>	104	3.7	4.2	\$1970	25.9	20.1	13.5	4.0	17.1	4.2	8.7	3.7	2.7	1.1
Farm Families, Crozet, Va. <sup>5</sup>	137	4.5	5.1	\$1687	37.6	15.7	14.1	1.4	17.3	3.1	4.9	4.0	1.9	.
City Families, Crozet, Va. <sup>5</sup>	140	4.8	5.2	\$2635	21.5	18.5	13.6	3.0	19.1	3.9	10.4	3.9	6.1	
Illinois, Farm Families <sup>6</sup>	70			\$2489	27.0	21.0	8.0		7.0					
Virginia <sup>7</sup>	140				18.3	19.2	13.3	3.0	19.4	3.6	12.1	4.0	6.9	

<sup>1</sup> *Rural Standards of Living in Dane and Green Counties*, University of Wisconsin, Stencil Bulletin 106, January 1931<sup>2</sup> *Farm Standards of Living in Faulkner County, Arkansas*, University of Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 279, 1932<sup>3</sup> *Incomes and Expenditures of Village and Town Families in Minnesota*, University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 253, 1929.<sup>4</sup> *Incomes and Cost of Living of Farm Families in North Dakota*, North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 271, 1933.<sup>5</sup> *Standards of Living in the Village of Crozet, Virginia*, University of Virginia, Record Extension Series, Vol. XVI, No. 2, 1931.<sup>6</sup> *Living Expenditures of a Selected Group of Illinois Farm and Small-Town Families*, University of Illinois, Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 372, 1929-30<sup>7</sup> *Rural and Urban Living Standards in Virginia*, University of Virginia, 1929.

representative. The purchases farmers make each year amount to many millions of dollars. Obviously the prosperity of farmers has an important influence on all kinds of business.

When farmers are considered according to their status as landholders, data show, ordinarily, that expenditures are highest for owner families, next highest for tenant families, and lowest of all for cropper families. Table XXVII gives expenditures of selected families in Kentucky, Tennessee and Texas, grouped according to these three classes.<sup>10</sup>

TABLE XXVII. EXPENDITURES FOR DIFFERENT ITEMS BY OWNERS, TENANTS AND CROPPERS

Item	All Families (861)	Owner Families (411)	Tenant Families (321)	Cropper Families (129)
Food inc. groceries	\$631.80	\$651.90	\$659.20	\$499.60
Clothing	254 70	283.90	246 80	181 10
Rent (10% value of house)	139.90	185.30	109 80	70.10
Furniture and Furnishings	28.50	33 40	26.60	17.70
Operating Expenses	172 90	210 90	159.10	86 20
Maintenance of Health	67.00	75 00	66 50	42 70
Advancement	84 30	130 10	51.10	21.20
Personal	16.90	17 10	18 30	12.80
Insurance (Life and Health)	36 90	44.70	36 90	12.20
Unclassified	3.10	2.70	3.50	3.30
Total	\$1,436.00	\$1,635 00	\$1,377.80	\$946.90

It is apparent from these figures that there is a wide range in the amount spent for living by different types of farmers. Size of family and ages of the children may influence the amount a particular family spends, but in all probability these factors alone would not account for the differences in the figures shown in Table XXVII. Other factors would be the economic status of the farmer, the kind of a community in which he lives, and the cultural influences prevailing in a particular area. In a study of the standard of living in Faulkner County,

<sup>10</sup> Data taken from Department Bulletin 1328, United States Department of Agriculture

Arkansas, the data substantiate the statement, that "On the whole owner and tenant families were drawn from the same population, but that the owners had a third more net cash income, enjoyed a standard of consumption higher by nearly one-fifth, reported living surroundings and home equipment at least one half better, and participated at least two-fifths more in the activities and support of community organizations."<sup>11</sup>

It is particularly significant from the sociological standpoint to note that expenditures for advancement, that is, expenditures for education, organization and club dues, benevolences, etc., are highest for owners both in the actual amount and in percentage of total amount. There are certain reasons for this difference. Generally speaking, the owner has more financial resources than a tenant. Usually he is older and has accumulated enough money to make the initial purchase of a farm, or else he has inherited one. It is possible also that the owner will have a family which is more mature and, therefore, that greater expenses will be necessary for schooling and other items classified as advancement. At any rate, the data seem to justify the conclusion that expenditures for advancement do not become large until the farmer has acquired a certain economic status. In general, the study of the 2,886 farm families (page 368) indicated that, as the total value of all goods used increased, the proportion spent for food decreased. Rent remained practically unchanged. The amount for advancement increased. Expenditures for clothing increased slightly. All other expenses increased gradually as total value of all goods increased.<sup>12</sup> The expenditures covered a great variety of items. This fact indicates that many farm families enjoy a large number of goods and utilities. The data suggest further that, as the income of farmers decreases, their expenditures for social life and community institutions are probably the first items to be cancelled from the list. The surplus left after food and clothing are pur-

<sup>11</sup> C. McCormick, *Farm Standards of Living in Faulkner County, Arkansas*, Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 279, page 26

<sup>12</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin No. 1466

chased must supply the comforts, social improvement, and luxuries, for the family. Here one of the strange anomalies in life appears. The smaller the income, the more social advancement is retarded. The absence of social advancement, in turn, makes the farmer less able to use intelligent and up-to-date methods in farming to increase the income. It is a vicious circle and can be remedied only by careful and wise planning.<sup>13</sup>

The data indicate that an inefficient farmer probably has difficulty in making enough money on a farm to provide an adequate living. The chances are he is obliged to accept a low standard of living. Misfortunes of one kind or another may also necessitate a reduction in expenditures. It appears futile for a farmer to try to make a living from land that is sub-marginal, because, even though the family might get house rent and much of the necessary food from the farm, other living expenses could not be met unless some additional income were secured.

There is no intention to establish the foregoing figure, \$1,597.50, as the ideal or maximum amount necessary for living on the farm. It simply indicates the fact that 2,886 farm families spent on the average this amount. Such a figure is more valuable for comparative purposes than as a standard. Living conditions, prices, and the demands of people fluctuate. The important objective is to provide standards of living on farms that will enable the farm population to make its maximum contribution to the welfare of the country and the world at large. The realization of this objective may involve an increasing cost of living in the future. It is the effective use and distribution of the money spent, as well as the amount, that deserves emphasis.

*Level of Living*—The level of living, as previously indicated, refers both to the amount, or quantity, of goods and services used and to the amount of leisure time. Although fewer quantitative data are available concerning this aspect of the standard

<sup>13</sup> When income is ample and expenditure of either time or money in social advancement is low, a different problem of socialization occurs.

of living than for the cost of living, nevertheless some statements and data may be assembled that pertain to the level of living. It is customary to speak of three levels of living—the subsistence level, the minimum comfort level and the luxury level. These terms are not rigidly defined, and families will differ in their opinions regarding their own level of living. Most people would agree, however, that, judged by current standards, the level of living of a majority of farm families could be classed as either the subsistence level or the minimum comfort level. In the first classification would appear many families with meager financial resources and also a certain number who by choice have adopted a minimum subsistence level rather than some other. Certainly, if judged on the basis of the amount of goods and services used, few farmers live on the luxury level.

*Food*—It is generally believed that farm families are well supplied with food, since the farm furnishes a considerable portion of it. In the case of the farm families listed in Table XXVI, the farm supplied much of the value of the food consumed. If there is a garden on the farm, vegetables can be secured during the greater part of the year. Dairy, meat, and poultry products are available on a majority of farms. It was found, for example, in a study of 342 Nebraska farm families, that meat, eggs, vegetables and milk were produced in sufficient quantities to meet home needs.<sup>14</sup>

A recent study of the food habits and the health of farm families in New York State indicates that there were no outstanding deficiencies in the diet of these families, although improvements were possible. A greater use of milk apparently was needed. "There seemed to be a slight association between the consumption of 'indigestible' foods and the occurrence of 'indigestion', while more than the average amounts of fruits and vegetables in the diet seemed to be associated with a lower average number of colds in the case of children, and with a less frequent occur-

<sup>14</sup> J. O. Rankin, *Cost of Feeding the Nebraska Farm Family*, Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 219



rence of constipation and 'indigestion', and the better condition of teeth in the case of the homemakers."<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, there is likely to be a scarcity of fresh fruits and vegetables in the diet of farm families during the winter months. These products are produced on the farm only during certain seasons of the year, and farm families have not formed the habit of purchasing them at stores. Sometimes rural merchants do not handle such products, because, they say, the demand is not great enough to warrant it. There is reason to believe, also, that even such widely-raised fruits as apples are not used regularly by some farm people. Orchards are not found on all farms. Certain farmers do not care to produce fruit, or they live in areas not adapted to this type of agriculture. In New York State, 8% of 402 farms in a district where diversified farming was carried on, had no orchard, 33% had no small fruit, and 5% had neither orchard or small fruits.<sup>16</sup> Nebraska farms, according to a survey of nearly 1,140 farmsteads, are not so well supplied with fruits. About 32% of the farms operated by owners and part-owners and 50% of rented farms had no fruit trees. Small fruits were found on only approximately 38% of the owner farms and part-owner farms and on 20% of the tenant farms.<sup>17</sup>

*Clothing*—The clothing needs of the farm family are usually well supplied, so far as quantity is concerned. It rarely happens that rural people suffer from lack of clothes to protect them from the weather. Farm work makes it necessary to wear good, substantial work clothes most of the time. These clothes are relatively inexpensive and easy to secure. The question of being well-dressed is a different matter, for there is a difference between being well-clad and well-dressed.<sup>18</sup> Being well-dressed

<sup>15</sup> Nancy Booker Morey, *A Study of the Foot Habits and Health of Farm Families in Tompkins County, New York*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 563

<sup>16</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Standard of Life in a Typical Section of Diversified Farming*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 423

<sup>17</sup> J. O. Rankin, *Nebraska Farm Homes*, Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 191, page 31

<sup>18</sup> C. C. Taylor, *Rural Sociology (Revised Edition)*, Harper & Brothers, 1933, page 166.

implies that the clothes be clean, neat in appearance, and of an appropriate design and color. On this score the farm population is at a disadvantage. There is no excuse for clothing not being clean, even though dry-cleaning establishments are not found in small country towns, but it is sometimes difficult to secure clothes that fit properly and that are of appropriate design and quality. It is the habit of farm men to buy ready-made suits at the nearest clothing store. If the town is small, the variety of stock is likely to be limited. Hence, the most desirable type of garment is not always obtainable. The variety of kinds and qualities of women's ready-to-wear clothing is also limited in small towns, for women's clothing stores are seldom found in towns below 1,500 to 2,000 in population.<sup>19</sup> As automobiles have come into general use, farmers can drive to towns where there are ample stocks of clothing in great variety both as to style and quality. Many of them do so. This is an advantage to farmers, and a gradual improvement in the quality, neatness, and appearance of clothes worn by farm people is taking place.

The fact still remains, however, that farm people are not likely to wear out "city clothes" as rapidly as persons in some other occupational groups. Such clothing lasts farmers a long time and therefore it may not always be of the latest style. But no one has proved that it is necessarily a disadvantage to wear clothes not of the latest style, provided they are neat, clean, and of good quality.

*Housing*—It appears that as a general rule the farm population is quite adequately housed, so far as the size of the house is concerned. In the case of the 2,886 families, there was an average of 6.8 rooms per family or household. This made an average of 1.4 rooms per person.<sup>20</sup> In New York the average size of the house on 402 farms was 8.8 rooms.<sup>21</sup> A study of about 1,140 farms in different parts of Nebraska shows that of all houses in the area 20% are six-room houses, 16% are five-

<sup>19</sup> C. R. Hoffer, *A Study of Town-Country Relationships*, Michigan State College, Special Bulletin 181.

<sup>20</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Department Bulletin 1466.

<sup>21</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Standard of Life in a Typical Diversified Section*, Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., Bulletin 423.

room houses, and approximately 15% are seven-room houses<sup>22</sup> These data indicate that farm houses are of ample size Data compiled by the President's Conference on Home Building and Ownership give further evidence in regard to this point and show, in addition, that there is comparatively little variation when different sections of the United States are compared. These figures are presented in Table XXVIII.<sup>23</sup>

TABLE XXVIII AVERAGE NUMBER OF ROOMS AND NUMBER OF BED-ROOMS PER FARM HOUSE, BY PRINCIPAL SECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES.

Section	Number of Houses for Which Information Was Obtained	Average Number of Rooms per House	
		All Rooms	Bedrooms
New England-New York	190	8.1	4.3
Central East	260	7.6	4 0
Appalachian-Ozark Highlands	192	5.7	3.4
Tobacco-Bluegrass	127	6 4	3 3
Cotton Belt	817	5.4	2.7
Corn Belt	95	7.3	3.8
Northern Dairy	188	7.8	4.1
Great Plains	188	5 1	2 6
Great Basin	58	5 5	2 6
Pacific Northwest	33	7 3	2.9

If over-crowding in farm houses occurs, it is likely to be voluntary. This may happen during winter months in houses not heated by a furnace, because people are then inclined to use only the few rooms that have stoves in them. How much over-crowding results from this cause is not known. It does occur sometimes. Over-crowding due to an excess of people for the size of the house is not general, but may happen in the case of large families living in sections of the country where people can barely eke out an existence. In the newer sections of the country the dwellings may be small, temporary structures totally

<sup>22</sup> J O Rankin, *Nebraska Farm Homes*, Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 191

<sup>23</sup> *Farm and Village Housing*, The President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, 1932. Reprinted by permission.

inadequate to meet the needs of families occupying them. A majority of farm houses do not have modern conveniences and improvements. Enough surveys have been made to establish this point. Perhaps a third of the farm homes have some of the modern conveniences, such as a central heating plant or central lighting system. Fewer houses have running water and completely equipped bath-rooms and toilets.

The report of the President's Conference on Home Building already mentioned presents data to show the manner in which farm houses are heated. These data are presented in Table XXIX.

TABLE XXIX PERCENTAGE OF FARM HOUSES WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF HEATING EQUIPMENT, BY REGIONS \*

Region	Number of Houses for Which Information Was Obtained	Per Cent of Total Number Having				
		Stove Only	Stove and Fire-place	Central System Only	Central System and Fire-place	Fire-place Only
New England-New York	188	68.6	1.1	25.0	4.8	0.5
Central East	263	79.3	6.0	12.5	1.2	1.0
Appalachian-Ozark Highlands	187	36.9	44.4	2.1	1.1	15.5
Tobacco-Bluegrass	133	46.6	26.3	3.8	2.3	21.0
Cotton Belt	566	43.9	8.1	1.1	0.4	46.5
Corn Belt	102	69.6	0.0	29.4	1.0	0.0
Northern Dairy	189	64.5	3.7	30.7	1.1	0.0
Great Plains	187	72.7	0.0	27.3	0.0	0.0
Great Basin	58	79.3	8.6	10.3	1.8	0.0

\* *Farm and Village Housing*, The President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership Reprinted by permission

It is evident that much improvement is still to be made, as in most parts of the United States a central heating plant is preferable to a stove or a fireplace.

The Fifteenth Census also includes certain tabulations regarding farm dwellings; among other items the percentage of farms having water piped into the house and electricity for lighting is

TABLE XXX PERCENTAGE OF FARM DWELLINGS HAVING CERTAIN  
MODERN CONVENIENCES \*

State	Per Cent of Farm Dwelling Having		
	Water Piped into Dwelling	Water Piped into Bathroom	Lighted by Electricity
New England			
Maine	49 0	12 6	33 1
New Hampshire	73 8	25 9	41.3
Vermont	72 3	24 8	30.4
Massachusetts	74 5	42 7	62 6
Rhode Island	56 8	30 9	57 5
Connecticut	62 3	33 5	52 7
Middle Atlantic			
New York	37 1	18 5	34.4
New Jersey	48 7	32 2	53 0
Pennsylvania	37 2	15 1	26 5
East North Central			
Ohio	29 2	11 1	25 9
Indiana	19 5	7 9	16 7
Illinois	19 8	11 0	16.0
Michigan	24 1	9.3	20.5
Wisconsin	15 7	8 0	25 6
West North Central			
Minnesota	12 5	6 0	12.6
Iowa	24 0	14 6	21 4
Missouri	8 3	4 3	7 9
North Dakota	7 5	3 3	7 9
South Dakota	14 5	5 6	10.9
Nebraska	29 6	13 8	16 5
Kansas	16 9	9 4	12 5
South Atlantic			
Delaware	15 5	10 6	16.1
Maryland	24 0	14 3	21 2
District of Columbia	46 2	41 3	64 4
Virginia	9 0	5 9	7.6
West Virginia	11 7	4 7	6 4
North Carolina	3 3	1 9	5 4
South Carolina	3 3	2.4	3.8
Georgia	3 1	1 9	2.9
Florida	12 8	10 4	11.0
East South Central			
Kentucky	3 4	1 0	2.1
Tennessee	3.3	2 4	2.6
Alabama	2 0	3 2	4 0
Mississippi	1 8	7 6	4.6
West South Central			
Arkansas	1 5	1 0	2.1
Louisiana	3 1	2 4	2.6
Oklahoma	5 3	3.2	4.0
Texas	13 9	7 6	4.6
Mountain			
Montana	11 3	5 5	7.5
Idaho	23.9	12.5	30.7
Wyoming	12 5	6 1	7.2
Colorado	20 5	10.3	15.7
New Mexico	8 9	5 2	5.4
Arizona	28 8	19 6	25 9
Utah	38 9	22 7	58 1
Nevada	35.3	21.7	33 1
Pacific			
Washington	48 6	29 2	48 0
Oregon	44 0	27 6	33.4
California	72.0	56 8	63 3
United States	15 8	8 4	13 4

\* *Fifteenth Census*, Vol II, Part I, Agriculture.

given. The information for each state pertaining to this point is presented in Table XXX. The appearance of any type of modern convenience is not uniform through the country, but varies with the profits gained in farming and the customs prevalent in different communities.

It is clear, however, that there is room for a more general use of modern conveniences in farm houses. Unless water is piped into the house, an enormous amount of energy will have to be spent by the family, and especially by the housewife, in carrying water. The value of this convenience cannot be measured in monetary terms; certainly it is worth many times what it costs in dollars and cents. The availability of electricity is very important also, because, aside from having the dwelling well-lighted, it is then possible to use various labor-saving electrical devices which add to the convenience and comfort of home life.

There are many reasons for the lack of modern conveniences in farm homes. Some conveniences have not been adapted to farm houses until very recently. Farmers have not been accustomed to their use and are therefore slow to adopt them. A certain number of farmers plan to move away from the farm as soon as they are financially able to do so, and they do not care to add improvements to the house for a tenant. Then, in many cases the demand for money to meet current expenses on the farm is so great that nothing can be spared for improvements in the house.

How rapidly modern conveniences should be put in a house when a farmer acquires ownership of the farm no one can say. Each individual family must solve this problem for itself. It is decidedly important that the farmer plan to install them and that he do so as soon as possible. Perhaps 50% of the farmers who own farms now could modernize their homes in most respects without jeopardizing their farm business, if they chose to do so. The main obstacle is the absence of desire. Once farmers get used to the idea of having modern conveniences in their homes, the conveniences will be added sooner or later. Advertising will help in this respect, but more important still is the explanation and demonstration of the value of modern

conveniences by agricultural extension workers and farm leaders

In the country there is ample opportunity for landscaping the premises around the farmstead. Unfortunately, this is not done frequently enough. If the yard is fenced so that livestock cannot get to it, there is no great difficulty in growing a nice lawn and shrubbery. Their absence is explained in many cases by a lack of ambition or of taste on the part of the farmer. Here again the problem of instilling ideals is paramount. There is also need for greater care in planning the farmstead. Barns and other buildings are often located so near the house that there is no room for yard space. Such crowding makes the place unsightly. It also increases the menace of flies and of farm odors around the house. Furthermore, when barns and other buildings are too close to the house, the difficulty of keeping the yard and the interior of the house clean is increased. Improvement of the yard and farmstead is one of the cheapest and most effective ways of improving the farmer's standard of living.

*House Furnishings*—The amount of furniture in farm homes varies a great deal. Some homes have an ample supply of all kinds, while others contain barely enough to enable the family to exist in the house. Furniture that would be deemed necessities by some families would be considered luxuries by others. One family may be satisfied with an inexpensive rug for the living-room floor; another family will spend a sizeable amount for a really good rug. Data are not available to show the quantity or quality of furniture in farm homes. Furniture dealers assert that farmers want substantial, but not expensive, grades of furniture.<sup>24</sup>

Some information is at hand showing the proportion of homes that have certain conveniences and comforts. Data for 451 Iowa farm homes are of interest in this connection. The percentage of these homes equipped with modern furnishings is indicated by the following figures.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The writer has discussed this point with many furniture dealers in rural trade centers

<sup>25</sup> G. V. Von Tungeln and Others, *Cost of Living on Iowa Farms*, Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 237.

CONVENIENCES AND COMFORTS	PERCENTAGE
Power washing machine	68.3
Piano	47.7
Phonograph	42.6
Self-heating iron	41.9
Power vacuum cleaner	25.3
Fireless or pressure cooker	4.4

Recently the radio has made its way into farm homes. In 1925, a year rather early in radio history, 284,006 farms reported radios in the special United States Census of Agriculture. Telephones were reported in 34.7% of the farm homes in 1930.<sup>26</sup>

*Other Items*—The level that the farm population has attained in health, use of leisure time, and advancement, will be considered in other chapters of this book. Few data are available concerning some of the items. The health of farm people, for example, can be inferred only by the available data for sickness rates, death rates, and the utilization of medical services. Detailed health examinations of a large or representative number of the farm population have not been made. Likewise not many studies are available concerning the amount and use of leisure time that farm people enjoy, though such data would serve as an important indicator of their standard of living. In matters of advancement complete data are difficult to obtain. A family may have many contacts that involve no expenditure of money; these therefore do not appear as a cost item. Yet such contacts may greatly improve living conditions. Probably the best criterion of advancement would be one that showed not only the amount spent for education, organizations, benevolences, etc., but also the number and kind of contacts people receive through participating in programs at neighborhood meetings, attending picnics, visiting, and reading. These are important in determining the cultural advantages of a group.

*Efficiency of Living*—The degree of efficiency obtained in the use of goods and utilities by rural people has never been determined. The factors involved are very complex and intricate, as the discussion in the previous paragraph indicated. General

<sup>26</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. II, Agriculture.



considerations must suffice at the present time. There is no doubt about the fact that rural people are frugal. Expenditures are guarded carefully. Clothes are not discarded until they are worn out, and torn clothes are mended. There is economy in purchasing foods. However, the technique that characterizes the purchase and utilization of commodities by farm people is largely a traditional one. Inefficiencies are likely to creep in as circumstances change, and remain undiscovered until brought to light when the details of living are studied scientifically. In this connection the science of home economics promises to do for home-making what the science of agriculture has done for farming. The utilization of different kinds and grades of foods, cooking utensils and furniture all involve questions of efficiency of living.

But the matter of efficiency is not only a question for families considered separately. It involves also the acquisition and utilization of goods and utilities that require group co-operation. Medical service, for instance, needs the support of many families. So also do super-power and community institutions of all kinds. Efficient living can no longer be confined to the precincts of the individual home. In many respects it is a community problem requiring the finest kind of co-operative technique. Churches and schools, for instance, cannot be maintained efficiently unless enough families co-operate to ensure economical units of operation.

The foregoing paragraphs indicate that the standard of living of rural people, especially farm people, has many advantages and some disadvantages. Food and housing can be obtained with a comparatively small outlay of cash. This is not true for other occupational groups. Cash expenditures are necessary, however, and these in turn are dependent upon the income from the farm. This income, as noted in the foregoing chapter, is not always adequate or certain.

When items associated with an adequate or high level of living are considered, the picture is not quite so complete. Modern conveniences are absent in many houses. The appearance and surroundings of the farmstead are often unsightly and possibly

unsanitary. Furthermore, owing to the fact that the density of population in the country is low, farm and village families have to solve special problems in social organization in order to get the advantages of many services offered on a community basis, such as medical and hospital service, libraries, and modern schools.

*Changing the Farmer's Standard of Living*—The improvement of the standard of living of rural people involves many adjustments. In some parts of the country the primary requisite is more income per family. All questions affecting farm income figure here. Efficient production and marketing methods are needed. Rural people must look to agricultural economists and farm management experts in the development and application of ways to improve farm incomes. The standard of living is, however, not only a question of producing income. Problems of expenditures are also important. A large income unwisely spent may mean no more than a smaller income that is carefully budgeted. Another element to be considered in the modification of the farmer's standard of living, consists of the attitudes and ideals that farm people have in regard to their living. The behavior of people is determined to a large extent by these influences. If farmers possess, or can be led to acquire, a new ideal of living, sooner or later their standard of living will approach, as far as possible, the new ideal. At one time the ownership of an automobile was an ideal with many farmers. Now automobiles are commonly owned and are considered necessities.

Attitudes and ideals are important in modifying the standard of living, when considered from another point of view. It is a truism in economics that in the long run, any class of producers gets only what it consumes.<sup>27</sup> If increased returns from improved methods in farming are not used to get modern conveniences in farm homes, more leisure time, and improved churches, schools and hospitals, they will be diffused into higher land values and lower prices. Then the standard of living of

<sup>27</sup> H. C. Taylor, *Farm Income and Farm Life* (Edited by Dwight Sanderson), University of Chicago Press, 1927, page 70

farmers will not be raised at all.<sup>28</sup> It is thus evident that income is not the only requisite for a high standard of living. It is only an essential factor in securing and maintaining it. Income must be associated with desires and ideals. When desires for a higher standard of living are present, they become powerful forces in making the income sufficient to provide for their satisfaction. Desires, ideals, and attitudes, are determined not by the income, though it may influence them to some extent, but by the psycho-social environment in which people live.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, it is well to recognize the fact that the ideals people hold regarding their living may be formed early in life. It is at this period that the most effective work can be done to change the customs and habits of living of any group. Modification of ideals after an individual is old enough to support a family is more difficult.

It is well to point out in a consideration of the influences that affect the farmer's standard of living that a satisfactory standard of living entirely favorable to social progress may be attained with only a moderate use of material good. A few years ago an article under the title, "The Way of Life in Vermont",<sup>30</sup> brought forcibly to the attention of the reading public the fact that characteristics like moderate conservatism, frugality, and careful planning may in the long run mean more to the well-being of the population than extravagant expenditures and the difficulties which they create. Mr. Louis Adamic's description of rural life in Carniola also reminds us that quality of living is not necessarily associated with the use of modern mechanisms in living.<sup>31</sup>

*The Standard of Life of Rural People*—The various factors in the psycho-social environment which affect the way people live, may be considered conveniently under the heading, standard of life. Standard of life "refers to the objective, the aim, the ideal

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, page 72.

<sup>29</sup> For a description of psycho-social environment, see L. L. Bernard, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, Henry Holt and Company, pages 75-76.

<sup>30</sup> W. Hurd, *Vermont, A Way of Life*, Survey 68 301-3, July 1, 1932.

<sup>31</sup> Louis Adamic, *Home Again from America*, Harper's Magazine, 165:513-280, Oct. 1932.

of the family in regard to its living.”<sup>32</sup> It is a cultural product and is determined by the contacts people have. Attitudes, customs, beliefs and inventions of all kinds influence it. Standard of life in a large measure determines the standard of living, because it sets up the goals of living. These goals, or values can be changed only by modification of the standard of life. Either new contacts and fresh ideas must be employed to produce these changes, or the old ones must be presented in a new way.

One of the most striking facts about the rural standard of life is the emphasis on monetary values. The origin of this attitude was described in Chapter IV, and it is only necessary at this point to note that it has a marked influence on the standard of living. In its extreme form it leads to parsimony and the development of a scale of values that is decidedly warped. Land, buildings and other kinds of property are over-emphasized; social values are minimized. Farmers become so engrossed in the accumulation of wealth that the true aim of farming—better living on the farm—is never realized. Better farming may be a reality, but frequently not better living.

Farmers are not to be blamed when this over-emphasis on material factors occurs. They are enveloped in a blanket of tradition and custom that seems well-nigh sacred. It is the product of generations. In this connection Miss Hoyt makes the following pertinent observation about the standard of living of Iowa farms, but the statement probably has application as well to other parts of the country. “While it seems that the Iowa farm families’ consumption is defective along æsthetic lines, it also seems evident that the families are following a healthy impulse in insisting on occupying themselves with labor until they are convinced of better alternatives. They are, of course, ignorant of many satisfactions other people have enjoyed. They also, like most of us in America, ride production hard. But, beyond this, they are reluctant to accept new cultural values on

<sup>32</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *Farm Income and Farm Life* (Edited by Dwight Sanderson), University of Chicago Press, 1927, page 127.

the mere say so of others.”<sup>33</sup> Without question, a thoroughly scientific attitude toward life demands that other values be brought into the picture. Education, health, and wholesome social contacts are essential to a normal life. If they are neglected, disappointment and chaos follow. It is the task of all institutions that interpret life to rural people to emphasize values that are essential to a normal well-balanced existence. This is distinctly the duty of the church. Other agencies, too—the school, the press, and agricultural extension service—need to emphasize the fact that better living can result only as all interests essential to wholesome life are developed. These statements are not intended to under-emphasize the profit motive, or the drive for efficiency in farming which is so prevalent. It is contended merely that efficiency and profits must be employed in ways socially useful, or their ultimate purpose is never realized. Decadent neighborhoods, socially starved farmers, over-worked housewives, and dissatisfied youth, are the doleful results of a standard of life that leaves out or minimizes social values.

Another feature of the standard of life in rural areas is the fact that it is dominated by the standard of life in the city. Unconsciously the idea has developed to some extent that city ways and city standards are correct, and that the country standards may advantageously conform to them. This is an unwarranted assumption, because there is no certainty that the scale of values prevalent in the city is any more desirable, when analyzed scientifically, than is that in the country. The city has the advantage of a high density of population and quick means of transportation and communication. Economically-sized groups for nearly all kinds of services exist there. Well-equipped stores, churches, libraries, and health services, may be mentioned as examples. The rural population may well strive for these, but it is doubtful if all social customs and all types of social organization found in the city can be adapted to the country. Country life is of necessity more communal than city life. Specialization and division of labor have not been developed so

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Ellis Hoyt, *Value of Family Living on Iowa Farms*, Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 281, p. 235.

far, and a less complex type of social organization is, therefore, suited to the country. The country environment offers real opportunity for the development of a high standard of life. The rural dweller may have close contact with nature, and his contacts with people are more nearly on a primary basis. The limiting factor in the country has been the lack of easy access to cultural advantages. This is being corrected as libraries and other means of intellectual development are brought within the reach of rural people. If they utilize these advantages, a standard of life may be developed in the country superior to anything that has previously existed in either country or city.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Define the term, *standard of living*
2. Discuss the use of cost as a measure of the standard of living.
3. Why is the amount of goods and services used an effective measure of the standard of living?
4. How may efficiency of living affect the standard of living?
5. Generally speaking, what proportion of the goods and services used by a farm family are furnished by the farm?
6. How does tenancy appear to affect the standard of living?
7. In what way may a change in the amount of farm income tend to affect the proportion spent for different items?
8. Evaluate the diet of farm families from the standpoint of health
9. Describe the housing of farm families from the standpoint of:  
(a) size, (b) presence of modern conveniences.
10. What circumstances determine the efficiency of living which a family may have?
11. Why are attitudes and ideals important in modifying the farmer's standard of living?
12. What are the principal characteristics of the farmer's standard of life?

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PART IV

RURAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION



## CHAPTER XVIII

### RURAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

An organization implies that a number of people are united together in order to accomplish some definite task or tasks. Before an organization can be formed a social group is necessary, though every group is not an organization. Whether it is an organization or not, depends upon the degree to which the interests and efforts of the people are integrated to accomplish particular objectives. Thus, when referring to rural groups the terms "organized community," "an under-organized community," "well-organized county" and others are frequently used. Considerations of rural social organizations then may deal profitably: (1) with the methods of integrating activities and interests of people; (2) with the degree to which the process may be carried; and (3) with the probable results of such integration. The present chapter embodies a discussion of social organization in rural areas from these points of view.

*The Neighborhood*—The smallest natural group, excluding the family, that occurs with any marked degree of regularity in rural areas is the neighborhood. The nature of this group was discussed in Chapter IV. There mention was made of the fact that it consists of a small number of families living in close proximity to one another. Frequent face-to-face contacts are an important characteristic of neighborhoods. Many of them have no organizations at all. People come together for particular purposes when occasion demands and separate as readily. It is not certain, however, that this is the most desirable state of affairs, because some important interest or activity may be neglected. The more progressive neighborhoods have formed at least one organization to develop their common interests.

Usually the neighborhood group is not suited to a high degree of organization. The essence of neighborliness is informality.

An excessive amount of organization is likely to retard this form of social intercourse. Generally one organization, in addition to basic institutions like the school and church, can furnish the occasion for a sufficient number of contacts. It may have a variety of names and meet a number of needs. A parent-teacher association, a farmers' club, a neighborhood club, or perhaps a religious organization like the ladies' aid, will fulfill this need in a neighborhood. With the exception of threshing rings, few organizations with economic objectives exist. Most neighborhoods are too small to support co-operative stores or marketing agencies.

*The Community*—Communities are larger than neighborhoods and enough people are included in them to carry on many activities of a social and economic nature. The larger communities are self-sufficing to a large extent. Even the smaller ones, such as the hundreds of town-country communities existing in the United States, can be self-directing in many important respects. They maintain business enterprises, schools and churches, foster recreational and health activities and establish standards of behavior that become accepted as the customs and traditions of the community. Such activities require organization. Therefore community organization and the organizations in a community have been important questions for many years.

A high degree of community organization requires that all organized groups in a given area co-ordinate their efforts in such a way that the welfare of the entire community is enhanced. In many respects community organization so conceived represents an ideal, rather than a real state. There are at least two circumstances which account for this fact. First, the degree and manner of integration that will promote the welfare of a community is not always definitely known. Conditions do not remain uniform from year to year, but change as geographical factors, transportation facilities, economic prosperity and the activities of near-by communities exert their influences. Secondly, many people become so interested in the objectives of some particular organization to which they belong, that community methods of procedure and programs are judged not by

their value to the entire community but by their worth to some particular organization. This bias on the part of people produces organizations in a community, but not community organization. The accomplishments of existing organizations show that they meet certain needs for their members and their existence seemingly depends upon this fact.

*Organizations for Religious Development*—The religious need is a vital one, not only because it is desirable to direct wisely the religious activities of people, but also because in addition to fulfilling the rôle as a directing agency, the church and its subsidiary organizations have a distinct social value. The denominational rivalries existing in some communities are proof of the fact that people are deeply interested in religious matters and in specific organizations which meet their needs. It may happen, therefore, that organizations centering around the religious aspects of life will not promote community organization in the truest sense of the term. They promote instead, church organization. A failure of churches to co-operate in order to serve effectively the entire community is perhaps their most frequent fault in community organization.

It does not follow from the foregoing remarks that a properly organized community should have only one church. Probably some communities need only one and would be more successful with this number, but numerous circumstances are significant in this connection. Extremely divergent views on denominational questions as well as language and nationality differences frequently may make it advisable to have more than one church. Religious interests are rooted very firmly in the minds of people and their direction cannot always be put into a particular mold. A more important question than number of churches in a community is their efficiency. There can be no reasonable objection to more than one if the people support their churches adequately, and if they achieve results equally as effective or more effective than would be possible with some plan of church union. Ordinarily of course, this will not be possible, but quantitative measures of church efficiency are difficult to secure. It seems to be true now, judging by research

studies dealing with churches, that more effective work can be done if there are about one thousand persons per church than if there is a smaller number. The church also needs to be supplied with a minister employed on a full-time basis, who has training and vision enough to apply the tenets of his church to the experiences and desires of his people. Beyond this point it is impossible to go in outlining the rôle of a church in community organization. Its tasks will vary in different places. The foregoing statements about number of churches apply also in about the same degree to the various subsidiary church organizations. Usually an organization to direct the religious interests of the various age and sex groups is helpful, but such a degree of specialization may be impossible or unnecessary, if there are too few people in any group, or if their needs are being met in some other way.

*Economic Activities*—Economic activities of people are basic to a well-developed community life, and organizations to promote them are necessary. The number and nature of these organizations must depend upon existing types of industries and businesses. In a farming community there is justification for breeders' associations, crop producers' associations and other organizations to assist agricultural producers. Farmers may organize also to market their products. Co-operative marketing associations furnish the best illustration of organizations of this type. Business men in a town find it advisable to promote their interests through organization. Luncheon clubs, chambers of commerce and other organized groups are examples of such activity. Why should not rural business men do the same?

What has been said regarding religious organizations and community organizations applies with equal force to a business or farming, that is such organizations cease to promote community organization whenever the interests of a particular group are emphasized to the detriment of the whole community. The objective of an economic organization is profit or business expansion. This purpose is usually in harmony with community development, but it may not be. The great effort some business organizations make to boost their town out of all pro-

portion to its possibilities is an instance where economic organization is inimical to community welfare. Advertising campaigns to induce people to buy what they do not need can hardly be called effective community organization, though it may be economic organization. The principle which must ultimately prevail is social welfare and not profit that has anti-social results.

The rôle of economic organizations in a community is, nevertheless, an important one. When farmers organize for financial gain the action is wholly justified, because it secures greater efficiency in the production and marketing of farm products. The program of the Farm Bureau, which is now a major farm organization, emphasizes economic development for agriculture to a very great extent.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, organizations among rural business men are necessary. They have many mutual interests to be developed. Chambers of commerce and various allied organizations are the result of a realization of this fact. These organizations promote business development, civic improvement, and other activities of value to the members.

*Educational Organizations*—To some extent the organization of educational activities in a community is provided for through the public elementary and high school. Legal measures demand that pupils attend school and that the curriculum meet certain requirements. In addition to this, a considerable number of voluntary organizations have developed to encourage educational interests. They include extra-curricular activities of the school for pupils and some phases of what is popularly called "adult education" for persons not enrolled in regular classes. In rural communities boys' and girls' club work is an especially important adjunct to the work of the school. This movement has developed rapidly in recent years and appears to be in complete harmony with the objectives of community organization. It develops vocational interests, gives young people experience in organization and provides a constructive use of leisure time.

The parent-teacher association is probably the most common organization that fosters education among adults. Its program

<sup>1</sup> O. M. Kile, *The Farm Bureau Movement*, The Macmillan Company, pages 128-130.

may be made applicable to a variety of conditions. As in all other organizations, the results secured depend to a large extent upon leadership and program. Occasionally an unwise leader or a jealous faction will force the organization out of harmony with its own ideals as well as with the ideals of community organization, but there can be little question of the value such an organization may have in every community. Educational objectives need to be emphasized and the program of the school interpreted to patrons. Organized effort is necessary to accomplish these purposes.

In addition to the parent-teacher association, or some organization which takes its place, there are frequently groups organized to pursue some special educational interest. Examples of such groups are child study clubs, classes in home economics, art clubs and others of like nature. These organizations are more specialized than the parent-teacher association and are, therefore, an adjunct to it. From the standpoint of community organization they are an asset, unless so much time and effort of the members is used in pursuing these specialized goals that organizations having more general interests are handicapped in their work.

*Recreational Organizations*—In some cases there is no sharp distinction between organizations that are educational in nature and those that have recreation as their chief objective. Recreation may include so many activities and interests that some forms of it are really educational. Fewer organizations for strictly recreational purposes exist in the average community than those fostering other activities and interests. At least two circumstances account for this fact. First, recreational activities are often carried on as a part of the program of a group organized for another purpose. Many organizations have picnics, banquets, contests and other recreational events. In fact, recreation appears to be a vital part of their program and tends to insure its success, partly because through such activities people have a chance, in numerous and subtle ways, to integrate objectives of the organization with their own thinking. Progressive churches do not neglect recreational interests nor do schools, the



Grange, or a majority of other organizations. It may be possible for groups interested in religion, economics or education to have so many recreational activities that few, if any, organizations planned solely for recreational purposes need exist. The occurrence in some communities of card clubs and other similar groups whose purposes seem to be wholly recreational may be due to the fact that the interests of members have not been successfully developed in other activities. Yet, it is obviously unfair and unreasonable to condemn outright organizations whose sole purpose is amusement of the members, because they do have some value to the people who belong to them. At least, they make possible a certain amount of informal contact and provide an escape from routine activities which may be monotonous and irritating. But it must still be asked whether these and similar benefits may not be secured in connection with other organizations and thereby the recreational activities thus used as an aid in the realization of deeper values in life. In efficient community organization the time and energy of people is used in ways that are most remunerative from the standpoint of developing a wholesome community life.

The advent of commercialized forms of recreation in town-country communities is a second influence contributing to the lack of recreational organizations. Public dance halls, pool and billiard halls and motion picture theaters are found in nearly every community. These agencies are a part of the business life of the town and therefore are operated for profit. Their effect on community organization depends very largely upon the kind of programs that are given and the amount of regulation imposed on them by the community. The latter influence varies with the customs and traditions prevailing in the community and with the location of the amusement agency from the standpoint of legal supervision. One reason for the popularity of dance halls and pleasure resorts on the outskirts of cities and towns in recent years is the fact that they escape a certain amount of supervision ordinarily prevalent within the corporate limits of the city. The various forms of commercialized recreation are now a part of the community life. Com-

munity leaders must recognize this fact and the duty of the community in regulating them.

Whether organizations with objectives of strictly recreational nature are needed depends upon the activities of other organizations in the field of recreation. In many town-country communities the need for them will not exist. A few organizations have a combination of objectives and thus provide for the constructive use of leisure time as a definite part of their program. The Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls appear to be organizations of this type. There are no organized groups among adults which correspond closely to these. Fraternal orders, while not at all identical to the Boy Scouts or Camp Fire Girls, resemble them in some ways and fulfill an important place in the lives of some adults. These groups meet regularly, have a ritual, endorse certain ideals, and afford diversion from regular duties for members who attend. Many of them have developed insurance plans and try in various ways to apply the ideal of brotherhood. In these respects fraternal orders are in accord with the purpose of community organization as described in an earlier part of this chapter. If the fraternal aspect is observed too rigidly, however, the organization gradually becomes isolated and its value to the entire community diminishes. Arbitrary divisions based on membership in any given organization are apt to have a pernicious effect because they exaggerate differences rather than emphasize common purposes and objectives.

*Philanthropic Organizations*—Philanthropic organizations in rural regions are a comparatively recent development, because assistance to the under-privileged or the disadvantaged has always been extended either through mutual-aid activities on a neighborhood basis, or by church societies and fraternal organizations. For the more serious or chronic cases these agencies have had the assistance of state and local units of government. Gradually, however, organizations for the specific purpose of carrying on social welfare activities have come into existence. A notable example of this is the development of the American National Red Cross in rural districts. This society received its greatest

impetus during the period of the World War, but the continuous existence of chapters throughout the United States indicates that there is a permanent need for organizations of this type. The recent part played by the Red Cross in the distribution of government-owned wheat and cotton is a fitting example of the value of such an agency. An official report of the Red Cross states that in the comparatively brief period of seventeen months—from March, 1932 to August, 1933—10,688,307 barrels of flour, 233,901 tons of feed, and 4,885 tons of cereal were distributed to needy persons, including many who lived in the drought-stricken areas or in rural areas where destitution was caused by other circumstances. This organization also used 844,063 bales of cotton in various ways for the benefit of needy families. In all of these activities the local Red Cross chapters played a very important part, although this work constituted only one of the many activities which the local organizations carry on for the benefit of people in their respective communities.

In addition to the American National Red Cross there are numerous other national organizations which extend their activities to rural communities, for example, Home Missions Boards of the various churches, the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., the Russell Sage Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation. Although these agencies do not usually have local branches similar to the local chapters of the Red Cross, nevertheless they are continually extending their services, insofar as possible, to rural communities which request assistance.

These activities, however, do not supplant community effort of an indigenous character in caring for the under-privileged in rural areas. Through their existing organizations rural people respond quickly to human needs. Fraternal organizations still help deserving brothers, and thousands of churches perform their customary rôle of extending assistance to the needy. A special organization, like the Ladies' Aid, may have major responsibilities in this work, or may simply carry on the work informally as the occasion arises. Even the agricultural extension agencies, which are designed primarily for the promotion of education, have recently engaged in numerous relief activities

in those areas where drought, insect pests, damaged crops, or other circumstances created the need.

*Miscellaneous Organizations*—There are frequently several other organizations in a community besides the four types mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs. Their classification into one of these groups is dependent to a considerable extent upon the program any particular organization has. For example, a civic organization might emphasize either economic or educational activities. A patriotic organization could be classed probably as educational, or some persons might prefer to make an entirely new classification for it. The significant point to remember is the fact that the name of an organization is less important than its function. What it does really counts. The name may be no indication at all of its value to the community or the activities it sponsors. Organizations having the same name will often have entirely different programs.

*Farmers' Organizations*—There are a number of so-called farmers' organizations which deserve special consideration, since their membership consists almost, if not entirely, of farm people. One of the oldest of this type is the Grange. It was organized soon after the Civil War and became in a short time a leading rural organization. As pointed out in a preceding chapter it is estimated that at one time this organization had 2,500,000 members. The plan of organization provides for the local or subordinate grange, a juvenile grange, the county or pomona grange, the state grange and finally the national grange. Meetings of the state and national organizations are held annually, but the meetings of pomona and local, or community, organizations are held more frequently. The latter usually has meetings every two weeks. The organization is fraternal in character and has a ritualistic exercise in connection with the initiation of members. Membership is not sharply restricted, however, as persons of good moral character and interest in agriculture may become members. Men and women are admitted to membership on an equal basis.

The purposes of the Grange are broad in scope and are designed to develop an appreciation of farm life as well as to

bring about equality for agriculture in an economic way. Worthy community enterprises of all kinds have been sponsored by the Grange in thousands of places in the United States. The meetings have provided opportunity for the development of talent in music, dramatics, and other arts and also furnished a forum for the discussion of public issues.

One program which could be duplicated in its essential characteristics thousands of times may give more definite understanding of what occurs at a subordinate Grange meeting. The event was held in a humble, though comfortable, farm home. Roll call consisted in each member giving original quotations. After that certain items of business were discussed, one being the request of the organization to express its opinion regarding the building of the St. Lawrence waterway. This matter was discussed intelligently and earnestly by both men and women before a vote was taken. Then there was a lecture. Next came initiation of officers. Finally, refreshments were served. Such meetings are a great benefit to farm people not only in providing entertainment but also in sharing useful information. It is a significant fact that many farm leaders in various states and on a national basis have been Grange members and have received a considerable proportion of their training for leadership in that organization.

Farmers' clubs, or community clubs, though less definitely organized than the Grange, perform a similar function so far as the local community is concerned. Such groups tend to socialize the people and to promote community development. An active club will soon create a progressive influence in the neighborhood or community.

The Gleaners is a fraternal organization for farm people which developed in Michigan and surrounding states during the decade of the 1890's. Its principal function was to promote co-operation in buying and selling and to extend mutual aid to its members. Life insurance has become an important part of the services offered by Gleaners. The membership now probably does not exceed 100,000. The organization has not spread beyond Michigan and adjoining states to any large extent.

The Farm Bureau is a national organization of comparatively recent origin. Its development has occurred since the close of the World War. The structure of this organization like the Grange provides for national, state, county, and township organizations. The purposes of the organization include: (1) the improvement of the financial returns on farms through efficient production and marketing of farm products; (2) the encouragement of legislation beneficial to agriculture; (3) the improvement of home and community life. Membership in the organization is determined by interest in agriculture and the payment of dues. Thousands of farmers have become members of the Farm Bureau. Local meetings, that is township meetings, (which really are community meetings) ordinarily are held monthly. This organization has been a great positive force in the development of rural life. Through its programs farmers have been informed about legislative matters; by means of the information it has disseminated modern methods of farming have been adopted on thousands of farms. It fosters the recreational aspects of farm life, and through the efforts of its home department farm life has been improved.

In addition to these organizations there are many others whose purpose is less general in scope. An example would be the various livestock breeders' associations and crop producers' associations that exist in various parts of the United States. The co-operative marketing associations may also be put in this list as well as "threshing rings", cow testing associations, and similar groups. There are thousands of such organizations in the country, and while they are primarily designed to promote specific interests, they frequently become the stimulus for other activities that are beneficial to the farm people either in a recreational or financial way.

*Number of Organizations in a Community*—There is a somewhat current belief among community leaders that many town-country communities have an excess number of organizations. This belief is based on the fact that organizations sometimes duplicate one another in their programs and on the fact that many families are urged to be members of more organizations

than they can find time to attend, or feel able to support financially. But whether there really is an excessive number of organizations must remain a matter of conjecture until research studies throw more light on the question. Since, however, the complaint is so general, it may be assumed tentatively that there is a valid basis for it and that a real problem exists.

Many circumstances apparently support the hypothesis American people are prone to depend upon organization. It is almost a magic word with some persons. It is assumed that when an organization exists in a community its alleged purposes will be fulfilled in some way. If there is a poor relief society organized, it is logical to assume that the community is interested in poverty, cares for the unfortunate, and has a constructive attitude towards poor relief. Unfortunately this is not always true, as social workers and other persons can attest from first-hand experience. An organization may exist in name only and become sort of a mask behind which people may hide when evading their real duty to a community. It seems to be a habit also for smaller communities to imitate larger ones in having organizations. A particular organization may be created not so much for its probable value to the community as for the imagined distinction the community, and especially the members, will gain by having it. Some state and national organizations tacitly encourage this attitude on the part of the people in the smaller communities. Leaders of these organizations desire as many branches as possible and work for their establishment without a careful analysis of the needs of the local community.

What criteria can be used to determine whether a community has too many organizations or whether it needs a new one? An exact answer cannot be made to this question, but the general principle involved is clear, namely, if there is duplication of effort too many organizations exist, or, if a new one will duplicate the work of others in existence, it is not needed. An outline of the major needs of a community and the organizations which may sponsor them will facilitate an analysis of the situation. A generalized type of outline is shown below.

NEED OR ACTIVITY	COMMUNITY-WIDE ORGANIZATION	SPECIAL ORGANIZATION
Religious	Church or churches	Religious organizations for men, women, young people, and children
Economic	A community-wide organization, such as a chamber of commerce or community club	Organizations for special occupational or business interests
Educational	School and Parent-teacher Association	Special interest groups, such as study clubs of various kinds
Recreational	No major organization (usually)	Athletic groups and teams, lodges for men and for women, special recreational groups
Philanthropic	A community-wide organization, such as The American National Red Cross.	Fraternal groups, health organizations, groups temporarily engaged in philanthropic endeavor.

Duplication does not occur so frequently in connection with major organizations as it does in the case of the special organizations. Here real duplication occurs whenever two organizations compete for the time and effort of the same persons. For example, if the parent-teacher association is active, there may not be time for a child study club, or, if the Farm Bureau is utilizing the time and effort of farmers, it may be difficult and needless to develop another farmers' organization. Boys' and Girls' Clubs and Boy Scouts or Camp Fire Girls may compete for the interest of boys and girls. And so, the list of possible duplications may be extended. It is a responsibility of community leadership to direct wisely the efforts of people in their organization affiliations. People can spend only a certain amount of time and money in this way. If an individual belongs to one community-wide organization for each of the major activities listed in the outline just given and one or two of the special organizations, his available time will probably be utilized.



It should not be concluded from the foregoing statements that there is never justification for new organizations in a community. There may be if new circumstances arise or if existing organizations cease to be active. Organizations tend to have life cycles, and when the period of decline sets in they must readapt themselves to the prevailing conditions or die.<sup>2</sup> Some organizations do die, for neither leaders or members are willing to make the necessary innovations. After they are gone a different organization may take their place. It is expedient for a community to use existing organizations whenever possible, but if the desired results cannot be secured with old organizations the formation of a new one is justified.

*The Community Council*—For a long time there has been discussion of ways and means to keep the community ideal before people and to co-ordinate the programs of various organizations so that the greatest benefits will be realized. The culmination of this effort has been the development of the community council idea. Other terms are used sometimes to describe the objectives but the idea is essentially the same. The council usually consists of one or two representatives of each organization and two or three persons to represent the entire community, regardless of any organization affiliations they may have. This body elects a president, vice-president and secretary. Regular meetings are held and attempts are made to co-ordinate the activities of the organizations represented. The idea has much to commend it, for there can be no objection to a full and frank discussion of projects that people in a community may carry out. The chief limitation of the community council plan is the fact that it presupposes a high degree of socialization on the part of organizations and their representatives. Unless people support the council in a whole-hearted way its work is seriously handicapped and may fail completely. Wise community leaders will not urge the organization of a council until there is reasonable assurance that a majority of the organizations will co-operate in a satisfactory manner. An ineffective community

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the natural history of interest groups see, Research Bulletin 84, Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station

council is possibly more of a handicap than an asset, due partly to the psychology of failure that accompanies it.

Since the ideal of a community council, as just described, is not always possible, the practice of having councils to represent certain interests has become common, especially in larger communities. These groups are called Council of Social Agencies, Council of Churches, and other names, depending upon the sphere of community activity they represent. Through organizations of this kind the purpose of a community council is realized within a particular area or part of the organized community life. This method of co-ordination approximates a community council to the extent that important interests are represented.

In smaller communities some deviations or modifications of the community council plan have occurred. In Missouri, for example, a standard community association was formed. This association has as officers, a president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer. An executive committee and program committee were created consisting of the officers and the chairmen of the various subsidiary committees that are needed. There are usually five committees of the latter type, namely, agricultural, home-making, educational, civic, and social.<sup>3</sup> A program of work was carefully outlined for each committee and the whole plan was approved at certain stages in its development by the entire community at a general meeting.

Any plan of organization that will integrate the efforts of people is desirable. A major benefit is the fact that it keeps the community ideal before them. The average individual does not readily grasp his responsibility to the community, so it must be emphasized and interpreted for him. People often become exceedingly proud of their community and its achievements when the importance of community influence is presented in a clear and logical manner. A second value to be derived from the establishment of a community council, or similar agencies, is the fact that often actual duplication of effort can be avoided.

<sup>3</sup> B. L. Hummel, *Community Organization in Missouri*, University of Missouri, Extension Division, Circular 183

A third advantage is the possibility of getting the entire community to endorse and work on some worthy project. Un-coordinated effort is likely to be less effective than is a program which will utilize all organizations in the accomplishment of definitely established goals.

*Intercommunity Organization*—If the community is considered as a group of people inhabiting a definite area and having common interests and activities, the question of intercommunity organization must come within the purview of this discussion. There is an important relation between size of the community from the standpoint of population and the kind of activities it may have. Some communities are too small to support all the services that a modern standard of living demands. The reader will remember some of the following figures. It is estimated that about one thousand people per church are necessary. Twelve hundred and fifty people can support a high school more successfully than a smaller number. Some trade agencies must have several thousand people to support them. Probably 10,000 people are needed to maintain a well-equipped hospital on a paying basis. And so it is with many services that people want. The wisest course for a community to pursue, when it does not have enough people to support any given activity or service, is to co-operate with other communities to get it. As yet, the most effective methods of doing this have not been determined with a reasonable degree of certainty. The idea and necessity for intercommunity co-operation in rural areas is new, although some steps in this direction have been taken. First comes intercommunity co-operation, or at least intercommunity service, in the case of merchandising. Smaller towns do not have, and in fact cannot have, all types of stores. People in these communities support such agencies of trade as they can in an economical manner, and then go elsewhere to secure articles not kept in stock by their own stores. Intercommunity co-operation is also evident in the case of road building, since state and county roads have become so important. Telephone service, and electric power are frequently supplied on an intercommunity basis. A single newspaper may print news for several communities.

In the field of health also some services, like hospitals, require the support of several communities.

At the present time intercommunity co-operation ordinarily does not extend beyond the integration of effort on the part of communities in a single county, or in an area which approximates it from the standpoint of population and taxable property. The county is a very significant governmental unit dealing with matters of a local character and it ordinarily contains enough people to support most of the services and organizations that people demand. Another distinct advantage the county has as a unit in rural organization is the fact that activities of public and private agencies can be brought into rather close harmony with each other. It has been observed frequently that county-wide voluntary organizations have a marked effect on public activities and services which the unit of government offers. Services supported by taxation are not inaugurated in advance of public demand but come in response to it. A history of many projects now supported by county funds, like public health nursing and county library service, would show that they are first favored and partially financed, perhaps, by voluntary agencies. Then, when people become convinced of the value of any particular activity, they are willing to support it.

Just as it is advisable to have some method of co-ordinating the efforts of organizations in a community, so it is advisable also in a county. People are not accustomed to think of programs in terms of areas so large, or of their relationship to them. In some counties, therefore, county councils or organizations having similar names have been formed. These groups are like community councils, since they try to co-ordinate the efforts of various county organizations and present projects that seem to be most necessary for the welfare of the people. But, as in the case of a community council, it is difficult to get representation for all phases of intercommunity effort. County organizations emphasizing particular interests have been organized, and are seemingly successful to a large extent. There are now county bankers' associations, county farm bureaus, county livestock breeders' associations, and many others. Apparently, organiza-

tions centering around activities and interests of this kind must exist before any plan designed to emphasize all aspects of community life on a county basis can succeed. The habit of intercommunity co-operation must be an outgrowth of the experiences people have in working together.

Whether a county represents the most satisfactory territorial and political unit for intercommunity co-operation in all activities cannot be determined definitely. In a few instances it seems to be advantageous for people in a larger area to co-operate, as is now being done in the case of trade and the marketing of certain agricultural products. Also two or more counties have been urged to co-operate in supporting district tuberculosis sanatoria and district homes for persons who must be kept at public expense. In the future, co-operation of counties in other activities may be advisable. The primary consideration is to have a population unit large enough to ensure efficient services of the various institutions.

*State and National Organizations*—Some interests are so broad and inclusive in scope that state and national organizations are formed to promote them. Many such associations, representing usually a federation of various county or community organizations, exist now. Their purpose is to co-ordinate efforts of subsidiary groups and to develop or to protect the interest of members. In addition to these activities, some state and national organizations endeavor to extend their influence into unorganized communities. All of these aims are in accord with the ideal of community organization and are questionable only when a particular interest is developed at the expense of, or to the complete neglect of, others equally important. Leaders of state and national organizations as well as leaders in local communities need to recognize the importance of the organic relationship in social life and social organization.<sup>4</sup> No important aspect of rural life can be developed successfully without due recognition of other influences affecting it. The major in-

<sup>4</sup> The need and possibilities of the organic view are discussed by Walter A. Terpenning in *Requisites to Rural Organization*, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XXXIII, pages 737-753.

terests and activities of people are closely related. Until leaders grasp this fact there is likely to be considerable overlapping and wasted effort in social organization. It seems probable now that the co-ordination of state and national organizations will be accomplished by a specialization of effort rather than by a division of territory. A well-rounded development of all the major activities in a state or a community is desirable, but one organization can seldom diversify its activities far enough to secure such a result. Major interests like religion, education, and business need separate organizations to promote them.

The distinct advantage of a state agency, aside from any service it may give to existing organizations, is to stimulate communities that are dormant from the standpoint of the activity considered. It is sometimes difficult for people to see their weaknesses or opportunities. While it is highly desirable to have a community "lift itself by its own boot straps," the fact remains that the original stimulus usually comes from an outside source. For example, in the case of three hundred and fourteen organizations in Wisconsin, informants stated that the source of motivation for the organization was outside the community in 90% of the cases.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes people are so familiar with their community that they are unable to visualize its problems and possibilities.

There is no assurance, however, that a mere suggestion is sufficient stimulus to cause an organization to be formed or, if formed, that it will be effective. Numerous circumstances peculiar to the community are determinative in this connection. Unless the organization is of continuous value to the members and to the community it cannot exist. If it duplicates the work of some other organization more thoroughly established, the future of the new one is very uncertain. All community organizations have to be indigenous to the extent that stimulus and direction given from the outside will release in a harmonious way the social attitudes already established.

<sup>5</sup> Research Bulletin 84, Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station

## STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the difference between community organization and organizations in a community?
2. To what extent is the organization of a neighborhood ordinarily advisable?
- 3 How may churches retard community organization? How may they promote it?
4. Cite instances to show how economic organizations may retard community development.
5. Why is it frequently unnecessary to have a community organization designed especially to provide recreation?
6. Evaluate fraternal organizations from the standpoint of community organization.
7. Describe the purpose of the various so-called farmers' organizations.
8. Why is it difficult to determine the optimum number of organizations for any particular community?
- 9 Describe the organization and purpose of a community council.
10. What are some reasons for inter-community organization?
11. What is the purpose of state and national organizations in relation to the organization of local communities?

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## CHAPTER XIX

### TOWN AND COUNTRY RELATIONSHIPS

An important aspect of rural social organization is the relationship between the town or village, which is usually the center of a community, and the country included in its trade area. In rural districts town and country are component parts of a community and both are essential to its well-being. Farmers cannot get along without a town, and the town, if it be strictly a rural trade center, cannot exist without farmers. Important as this relationship may be, it is often overlooked or obliterated by superficial considerations.

Some of the problems existing in town and country relationships arise from the fact that the purposes of a town or village in the present system of rural social organization are not clearly understood. These are quite numerous and their great variety tends to create confusion. An enumeration of the more important services of a town will suffice to show the complexity of the problem. First, it may be a distributing center for goods and professional services; second, financial services are offered by the town to the community; third, marketing facilities are provided for farm produce (products are sold directly to consumers or shipped to more distant markets); fourth, some farm products are manufactured or processed at the town; and fifth, the physical equipment and stimulus for certain social activities are supplied. These services have varying importance in different towns and in different localities. Usually the distribution of goods is the principal one; the other services which a town gives grow up in conjunction with this major function.

*Influences Affecting the Services Towns Give*—Towns are aggregates of population resulting from the net effect of geographical, economic and social forces. They come into exist-

ence, grow for a time, and then sometimes decline or pass away entirely. In days before the automobile a town had to be within reasonable driving distance to be easily accessible to the farmer. Eight or ten miles usually marked the limit it was possible to travel conveniently with a team, and of course a shorter distance was preferable. During the time previous to the automobile, therefore, towns developed in well settled rural areas within a "team haul" from the farm. Stores and businesses in these places found it possible to offer a wide variety of goods and services, because customers did not and could not easily go elsewhere to make purchases or to market produce. These were the days when the general store, the general practitioner in medicine, the country banker and the community newspaper were an integral part of rural community life. People were acquainted with one another and personal relationships colored business transactions and professional services.

But a new era came when the farmer purchased an automobile. Then he was free to go to towns other than the one nearest him. He became more of a shopper in the modern sense of the term. Not only did he change his buying habits, but also in some cases, his marketing practices, for now a truck might take cream, poultry or livestock to a more distant market. The result of this change was an inevitable break in the ties which bound the farmer to his original trade center. Economic dependence on the nearest town diminished, and the relationships of farmer with townsman became less personal.

While these changes were taking place, business men in the smaller towns became perplexed or provoked as the turn of events might direct. They, too, were facing a new day and whether they liked it or not, adjustments had to be made to the new régime. The most logical step for them to take was to urge people to support the home town by trading in it. This was done with a great deal of enthusiasm. Newspaper men shared in the belief also, for their livelihood depended upon advertisements local merchants gave as well as upon subscriptions for their paper. But the majority of such appeals went un-

heeded, unless the articles or services offered compared well with what might be secured elsewhere, and of this customers reserved the right to be the judges

These conditions brought a new alignment in the services of distribution that towns offered rural people. It became evident, first of all, that a majority of small towns must be as efficient in merchandising goods as the larger ones. Otherwise competition would drive them out of existence. Secondly, the fact that every town could not offer all kinds of services demanded recognition. A trade center was limited in this respect by number of buyers, if by nothing else. All towns could not offer an equal number or variety of services. This condition still prevails. It is a fundamental limitation and deserves recognition in any consideration of town and country relationship.

Several research studies of rural trade centers which have appeared in recent years tend to substantiate the foregoing statements. A study of the growth and decline of farm trade centers in Minnesota showed that in the older settled portions of the state there had been a real decline in the number of trade centers under 500 in population. Un-incorporated centers showed a greater tendency to decrease in size or to disappear than did incorporated centers. Places with less than five business units were especially likely to disappear. The most prominent factors determining the disappearance of trade centers seemed to be changes in the tributary population, type of agriculture, transportation, marketing organizations, and buying habits.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, new towns appeared in sections of the state that had been recently settled and one half of all trade centers under 2500 population in 1905 and existing until 1930 increased in population. In South Dakota geographic factors, especially rainfall, affected the density of population and consequently the territorial distribution of the trade centers. These influences, in conjunction with the use of the automobile and other means of communication and transportation, caused some trade centers

<sup>1</sup> C E Lively, *Growth and Decline of Farm Trade Centers in Minnesota, 1905-1930*, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 287.

to disappear.<sup>2</sup> In Louisiana, also, there was a tendency for small centers not favorably located with respect to a larger center, transportation facilities, and other factors to decline or to disappear entirely.<sup>3</sup>

*Size of Town and Services Offered*—Some studies pertaining to the relationship between size of town and the types of service it can offer have been made and a limited number of quantitative indices are available. Data for Michigan towns show the following relationships:<sup>4</sup>

SERVICE	MINIMUM POPULATION OF TOWN	
<i>Stores</i>		
General stores	No lower limit	
Drugs	approximately	500
Grocery	"	500
Hardware	"	500
Furniture	"	1,000
Jewelry	"	1,000
Dry goods	"	1,000
Men's clothing	"	1,000
Shoes	"	1,000
Millinery	"	1,000
Variety	"	1,500
Women's clothing	"	Occurs irregularly in larger towns
<i>Professional Services.</i>		
Physician	"	500
Dentist	"	1,000
Lawyer	"	1,000

Density of population and habits of the people might affect these relationships somewhat, but in general they appear to be representative of conditions that prevail in strictly rural trade centers. Data compiled in Minnesota and New York state give similar results. Suburban towns or manufacturing towns might

<sup>2</sup> Paul H. Landis, *South Dakota Town-Country Trade Relations*, South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 274. See also Bulletin 279 of this Station.

<sup>3</sup> T. Lynn Smith, *Farm Trade Centers in Louisiana*, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 234.

<sup>4</sup> Special Bulletin No. 181, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station.

show some variations because different conditions prevail in these places.

*Types of Trade Centers*—Since towns vary in the number and variety of services which they offer, it is possible to classify them roughly from this standpoint into certain types. Such a classification is presented here. Three types emerge. They are. (1) convenience towns; (2) shopping towns; (3) the terminal towns or cities.

Towns of approximately 500 in population, which offer goods and services that are fairly well standardized and regularly demanded by the people, belong to the convenience type. These towns have grocery, drug, and hardware stores. They also offer marketing facilities and sell lumber, coal, farm machinery and other articles farmers regularly purchase. The small center, if favorably located, has a certain rôle to fulfill in the trade relationship of the farmer in the United States. Much of the confusion in thinking about the future of the small trade center has arisen from a misunderstanding regarding its primary purpose, namely to supply goods and services which are regularly and frequently needed by the rural population.

A shopping town is one which, in addition to selling convenience goods, has stores of the specialty type where people may purchase articles not ordinarily classed as convenience goods. Clothes and shoes of the type worn in cities, expensive articles of furniture, services of specialists in professional lines, and numerous artisan services like those of photographers and tailors, are found in the shopping town. Occasionally a farmer will drive through a convenience town in order to get to a shopping center which is usually a town having a population of 2,500 to 5,000 or more.

The last type of trade center, the terminal town, or city, offers in addition to convenience and shopping facilities, goods and services that are highly specialized. It is usually a city of considerable size. The farmer may go infrequently to the terminal center when the convenience or shopping town is unable to supply the article or service he wants. The Louisiana study previously referred to showed that from 1901 to 1931 a funda-

mental tendency toward specialization and division of labor in retailing was under way.<sup>5</sup> Farmers were patronizing centers of various sizes, depending upon the type of service they wanted.

These types of trading centers are not located in any regular manner, because the forces creating or maintaining them do not exist uniformly in all parts of the country. There may be several towns of the convenience type and then a terminal center. Or, there may be a convenience town located near one or two of the shopping type. This irregular location of towns retards community development projects in numerous ways. Leaders do not always know what their town should attempt in order to serve the people living in its trade territory. Perhaps, because of the competition of other trade centers or a lack of sufficient population, a town may be destined to become a convenience town. Yet its business leaders will try to make it a shopping center and may hope secretly that it will exceed even this goal in numbers and types of businesses. Likewise, in shopping towns uncertainty exists regarding the services their agencies should offer. Even in a terminal center there is often confusion, not because leaders doubt its importance, but rather because they do not know what obligations their town or city owes to adjoining places or how their efforts may be co-ordinated harmoniously with them.

Farmers are even more perplexed if they ponder over the matter, because they are appealed to constantly for support from all types of towns. Only those living close to the large centers escape the dilemma. If the nearby town is small, such as one belonging to the convenience type, farmers must either accept the limited service which it offers, or go elsewhere, thereby decreasing still further its possibilities as a trade center. Businesses and organizations in different towns frequently do not present a co-ordinated program to rural people and the latter are therefore unable to respond in a consistent manner. Certainly all farmers do not have a single trade center for even ordinary business transactions. In a study of the buying habits of 1,351 Michigan farmers who named the places where they purchased

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

clothing, furniture, groceries, hardware, or did their banking, the results showed that only 47.9% patronized one center only for all these services, 36.8% went to two centers; 12.7% to three centers; and 2.4% to four centers<sup>6</sup>

*Co-ordinating the Efforts of Towns*—In general, towns have not put forth a great deal of co-ordinated effort to serve the farm population. Each one has tried to get as much trade as possible, even though it may be secured at the expense of another center. Moreover, within a single town duplication of effort has occurred, sometimes with a resulting curtailment of efficiency. If general stores, for example, persist in selling dress shoes, it may be impossible for a specialty shoe store to exist. It has been only since the development of chambers of commerce, or similar organizations, in the smaller towns that well-planned attempts have been made to co-ordinate the efforts of merchants and other business men within a single trade center. The next step in the improvement of trade facilities for rural people is for different towns to co-ordinate their efforts as much as possible.

There are two possible methods of co-ordination. One method would be for business men and business organizations to agree that each town should offer services consistent with its size (including the population of the trade area) and that they would co-operate with one another in developing non-competing services. Under this plan all towns would offer convenience goods, but shopping- and specialty-goods would be sold principally in a shopping town. A convenience town would help its customers by assisting the shopping town in its rôle. In the same manner, convenience and shopping towns would assist the terminal center as much as possible in giving the service which it should render.

Such a system of co-ordination, however, is an ideal rather than a reality. It is difficult for residents in a single town to act as a unit, and still more difficult for people in different towns to co-operate. Consequently another method of co-ordination has developed. It involves the improvement of some particular type of service without regard to other services offered. Re-

<sup>6</sup> Special Bulletin 181, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station

tailoring groceries by chain stores illustrates well this type of co-ordination. General management of the stores and the major purchases are concentrated at a terminal center, but stores in smaller towns belonging to the chain profit by the connection. Chain, or branch, banking represents the same principle in financial service. All such forms of organization, as they are extended to rural trade centers, bring within reach of the rural population efficient management and a combination of effort between trade communities not available under other circumstances.

Some persons have looked askance at this type of inter-town co-ordination, because they fear it means further domination of the small center by a larger one. There is a belief in some places that if this form of co-ordination proceeds much farther the individuality of the town will be lost. Business relations will become impersonal and secondary means of social control will operate. Due to these changes individual initiative and opportunity for the individually owned enterprise may be curtailed. These claims are not facts, but opinions. Probably effective arguments could be presented to show that such results will not occur. The de-personalization of business which is associated with the corporate form of organization may be more apparent than real. No type of business organization can exist permanently if it neglects human values, because sooner or later this neglect will create its downfall. People demand efficiency, and if the corporate form of organization gives it to them they will not oppose it. The social values inherent in the privately owned establishment might be conserved in other and possibly more effective ways. The disappearance of the old type of isolation which previously existed among towns and businesses affords considerable proof that the newer forms of co-ordination are effective.

*Other Methods of Improving Service*—Co-ordination of effort among towns is only one way to improve the services they offer. There are numerous other measures that may be taken. A town may act as a unit in providing marketing facilities, in helping to maintain professional services, and in encouraging



the development of school and church facilities. One of the most common ways that organizations in the town encourage community development is by inducing manufacturing plants to locate in the town. This is a worthy and enticing program, because successful manufacturing enterprises increase population and wealth. It is, however, unrelated to other activities of a town except that, as population increases, some retailing and professional services that previously did not exist can be offered. Possibly, also, the local market for farm products is increased, and this is an advantage to farmers. Nevertheless, many towns have lost large sums of money by unwise investments in factory projects. No town can safely spend money for a factory unless a very careful survey of the situation has been made by competent persons. Ordinarily, farmers are not directly interested in this aspect of community development.

Leaders in a large number of rural trade centers have recognized these facts and have encouraged the development of the chief industry upon which the welfare of the rural trade center depends, namely, agriculture. Their efforts in this direction have been numerous and far-reaching. The employment of county agricultural agents has been favored, and boys' and girls' club work has received the hearty endorsement of business men. Frequently they have donated funds for this work. Some banks have loaned money on pure-bred livestock purchased either by club members or farmers. Community and county fairs have been encouraged. Such activities tend to increase the quantity and quality of agricultural production and thereby to increase the profits in farming. The profits then influence favorably the business activities of the town.

Distinction should be made between activities mentioned in the foregoing paragraph and those intended to increase trade by direct means. Numerous plans such as bargain days, booster campaigns, trading stamps and lottery schemes of various kinds have been developed to foster the latter objective. The net results of these efforts are rather questionable, because they focus the attention of people upon bargains instead of upon more constructive services which merchants offer. Special sale days par-

ticipated in by every business establishment tend to make shoppers out of customers instead of regular buyers.<sup>7</sup> People get the habit of expecting to secure goods at less than their regular prices. This is a disadvantage, therefore such methods of stimulating trade have been abandoned in many towns.

Another way of stimulating trade is to entertain people. In order to do this, various forms of entertainment are used, but the principal ones are band concerts, free motion picture shows, and fairs or exhibits. People come to town to enjoy these entertainments and, while there, make purchases. Such events are probably more effective than "bargain days" in sustaining an increased volume of trade. The chief precaution to observe in their use is that people may get the habit of receiving benefits without assuming any responsibility in supporting them. If this happens, their initiative becomes dwarfed and potential leadership remains undeveloped. Possibly it is a recognition of this weakness in free entertainments that has caused progressive business men's organizations to encourage community projects for which both town and country people assume joint responsibility. Farmers' and merchants' picnics and community fairs illustrate the latter type of activities. Often merchants close their stores, and the whole community enjoys the events that are being given. From the standpoint of community development such co-operation is very desirable.

*Services Associated with Sale of Goods*—There are, nevertheless, important services that business men may render in connection with the sale of goods. To a certain extent, merchants are the purchasing agents for the community. It is their responsibility to place before the people a selection of commodities that will be most useful to purchasers. It is their duty also to be able to point out the comparative advantages of the different grades of articles and to help customers select the kind best suited to their needs. This is an ever-present duty and is of much importance to customers. It is sometimes desirable also for merchants to offer for sale certain necessary articles not ordinarily

<sup>7</sup> This, of course, does not preclude the use of "leaders" and the quotation of special prices on certain articles

found in the community. Numerous surveys of rural families have shown that there is a paucity of modern household appliances in many farm homes, although they are as necessary on the farm as in the city. Merchants have an opportunity and duty, perhaps, through advertising and salesmanship to encourage rural people to purchase such articles. The same responsibility also exists in the case of certain kinds of foods which should be a part of a healthful diet. Furthermore, many personal elements are associated with the merchandising and sale of goods. Customers appreciate and respond to a wholesome interest in their welfare made manifest by the merchant.

*Town and Country Relationships in Other Activities*—Town and country people are both members of a community. They therefore mutually influence each other in all aspects of community life. However, a free flow of contacts between these two groups does not always exist. One difficulty is the imagined superiority of town people and the equally imagined inferiority of country people. These attitudes originated a long time ago, when wealth and culture were the chief possessions of the city. But they are without foundation today, because the major differences between the country and town are diminishing rapidly. Yet the attitude persists. It is shown by an occasional aloofness of the town toward the country and by the hesitancy of the country groups to meet town people on an equal basis. Moreover, the town residents have legal identity, for the right of incorporation endows them with privileges that are denied people living in the trade area. Schools, public halls and churches are usually located in the towns and are controlled by them, at least in so far as legal controls are effective. Country people also have rights, but these are not clearly defined or legally enforceable. Then, too, occupational pursuits of town people tend to create different attitudes than farm people have. Especially is this true of business men whom farmers meet frequently and who are often leaders in community enterprises. Farmers do not understand these attitudes and are inclined to overestimate the position of the business man.

The result is a tendency in some communities for the town

and country groups to remain apart as much as possible. They do not intermingle in a social way. Town people have their clubs and business organizations, and farm people have theirs. Even in the case of churches, numerous studies have shown that town churches reach only a portion of the country population in the community. For example, in the study of an Ohio county it is stated that farmers constitute only 24.9% of the church membership of the twenty churches in the county and only 24.4% of the Sunday morning attendance.<sup>8</sup> Surveys of churches in 140 agricultural counties made by the Institute of Social and Religious Research show a similar trend. Although about half of the membership in the village churches lived in the country, the service of this institution to the country population is inadequate.<sup>9</sup> Town residents usually constitute a large percentage of fraternal organizations and social clubs. Unless schools are consolidated, the town has the advantages associated with its ownership and control, and high school pupils from the country are admitted only at the discretion of the town board of education.

It should be stated in fairness to town people that the disadvantages experienced by farmers, or apparent discriminations against them, are not premeditated or desired by the town. Intelligent people know that no community can reach the highest goals in community development if the farm population is at a disadvantage. Community progress is more certain when a progressive, intelligent farm population works with town residents having similar qualities. If the two groups are suspicious of each other and non-co-operative, community development projects fail, or are never started. Methods of harmonizing the interests of town and country people are, therefore, important and constitute the theme of the succeeding paragraphs.

Up to the present time little has been done in a legal way to remove the impediments caused by the incorporation of the

<sup>8</sup> Perry P. Denune, *The Social and Economic Relations of the Farmers with the Towns in Pickaway County, Ohio*, Ohio State University, Bureau of Business Research Monographs, No. 9, page 9.

<sup>9</sup> Edmund de S. Brunner, *Village Communities*, George H. Doran and Co., page 70.

town It has not been attacked in any far-reaching manner, although in one state (North Carolina) legislation has been passed permitting communities to incorporate. When a community incorporates, the incorporated district may include farms in the trade area of a town. In most cases, however, the problem has been attacked in a haphazard manner and bits of legislation have been passed only when there was urgent need for them. In a former chapter mention was made of the community center act in Wisconsin which enabled town-county communities to build, support and control community center buildings. In some states the right of a town corporation to co-operate with voluntary organizations in the community has been recognized in a legal way. Proposals have been made also that zone systems be established about towns and that property in certain zones be taxed for the support of municipal services<sup>10</sup> For example, zone number one, extending around the town for a distance of three miles, might be taxed for the support of fire trucks and other equipment kept in the town, but available for use in both town and country. This zone might also be taxed for electric light service supplied from the town. Zone number two, consisting of territory within a radius three to six miles from the town, might be taxed for the support of electric service but not for the service of the fire department. Such measures are only proposals, though they represent a principle in legislation pertaining to municipal matters; namely, permit people in designated areas to support by taxation services which they can advantageously have. The rights of incorporated towns carry this privilege, provided there is no conflict with state laws. Metropolitan districts around cities demonstrate the identity of interests an area may have, and the advantages of laws giving it certain legal powers are well recognized. Legislation permitting rural districts and town corporations to form a consolidated school unit utilizes the same principle. Finally, in the absence of legislation permitting town and country to co-operate legally, voluntary activities have sprung up. Many communities have

<sup>10</sup> See, C J Galpin, *Rural Social Problems*, D Appleton-Century Co., pages 221-227.

purchased fire apparatus voluntarily, and protection is thus secured for property in either the town or country. In a few places town and country people have co-operated in the employment of a physician. By doing so, both groups are supplied with this important service which would otherwise be unavailable. These activities portend a greater degree of co-operation between town and country in the future and point to the importance of community-wide programs for churches, schools and other agencies.

Churches are important not only because religion is a dominant factor in human life, but also because socialization of the community is fostered by a progressive church program. The up-to-date church has meetings regularly, reaches all age groups, and gives the members opportunity to do practical community work. The outstanding weakness of many church programs from the standpoint of town-country relationships is the fact that they are not community-wide. Denominational rivalry and over-institutionalization partly account for this fact, but sometimes a church in town will compete with one of the same denomination existing in the trade area. There are possibly some fundamental reasons why farmers prefer to attend a church in the country, although in many communities they do go to a church in the nearby town. It seems logical to expect leaders in town churches to fuse the interests of farm people with the town church, or else to show why it cannot be done. At least they can encourage co-operation between town and country people in all matters that involve community welfare. Religion is a strong bond and if a community becomes united in religious matters other forms of co-operative activity develop readily.

The school deals with interests and activities that affect both town and country people. Its task is to develop a curricular and an extra-curricular program that will appeal to people in the country as well as to people in town. Such a program will necessarily include vocational agriculture. This course appeals to many of the farm boys and affords a means whereby the school may interest farmers in educational projects. Possibly this is the most needed addition to the curriculum from the stand-

point of the country. The extra-curricular program may include agricultural classes, farmers' short courses, community fairs, and other exhibits. Events of this kind stimulate interest in community development and favor co-operative activities between town and country.

The rural newspaper has an important rôle to play in town and country relationships. This is true because a newspaper not only reports but also interprets events. It thus aids in the formation of public opinion. Too often, apparently, the editor in a town-country community has been content, or forced by necessity, to print proportionally more news about town residents than about country people. There is no inherent harm in this except that it tacitly carries the assumption that the town people are more important. Country people therefore conclude that their contribution to the community is insignificant or is not wanted. Many of the events occurring in the country make good news for a paper. Yields of grain, results of experiments with fertilizers, purchases and sales of pure-bred animals and the improvement of farm buildings are of interest to the local community. When reported in the paper, they give farmers the impression that the town is interested in them and that they are definitely a part of the community.

The second weakness of some rural newspapers from the standpoint of town and country relationships is the fact that the editor joins too freely with the business men in urging the country people to be loyal to their community by trading at the town. No harm can result in urging people to trade in the home town when the goods and prices are equal to what may be secured elsewhere. But sometimes they are not, and when this is true, people will go to another center if they possibly can. An editor only antagonizes them, then, by exhortations to be loyal to the community. People are apt to be more loyal to their own pocketbooks. The constructive rôle of the editor in this respect is to explain to the readers wherein values offered by local merchants are equal to those elsewhere, and, if they are not, to try to find the reason.

The fields of recreation and art are not fully developed at the

present time, but they are exceedingly important in creating or maintaining a wholesome, co-operative relationship between town and country. When people play together they will usually work together. The kind of recreation which furnishes a chance for many informal contacts is an excellent means of developing an understanding between town and country residents. Picnics, pageants and plays interest people greatly. Wholesome activities like dramatics develop self-expression on the part of participants and focus the attention of a community upon the play and the players rather than upon their places of residence. Music, also, has an effective socializing influence. Band concerts, orchestras and vocal numbers, if participated in by both town and country people, create a spirit of unity and comradeship that can seldom be achieved in any other way. Athletic teams representing the community exert great influence in developing community spirit and in eliminating class differences.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Enumerate the services which a town offers to the population in its trade area
2. How has the use of the automobile affected the trading habits of farm residents?
3. Explain how the size of a town affects the services which it may offer
4. Classify trade centers according to the types of service which they may offer.
5. How may the services of towns be co-ordinated?
6. To what extent may the advent of manufacturing enterprises in a town affect the services which it offers to farmers?
7. Why is the improvement of agriculture of value to a rural trade center?
8. What circumstances tend to separate town and country groups in rural communities?
9. How may schools and churches promote harmony between town and country residents?
10. Describe the rôle of the newspaper in harmonizing the interests of town and country groups.



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## CHAPTER XX

### RURAL-URBAN RELATIONSHIPS

At the present time a discussion of rural social organization may advantageously include a consideration of rural-urban relationships within its purview. These parts of our society mutually influence each other, and unless a student is cognizant of this relationship an adequate understanding of rural social life is impossible. Cities have existed for a long time, but their effect on the country population has been especially noticeable within comparatively recent times. It has been most marked since the rise of what Professor Gras calls metropolitan economy.<sup>1</sup> In the United States these influences are especially recent, partly because of the fact that the major metropolitan centers are new, and partly because modern means of transportation and communication, as well as economic interdependence, have brought rural and urban people into closer contact with each other.

At first the attitude of rural people toward the city and its influences was one of avoidance. The city was viewed as a growing social monster that consumed and dominated everything in its path. This attitude was expressed by several writers<sup>2</sup> who believed that the salvation of a nation depended upon the freedom of the country from the many evils associated with city life. Further, they believed that the city could not exist permanently unless there was an inflow of a strong, virile group of migrants, who came from the country in search of a livelihood or adventure.

Population data show unquestionably that the rural population produces proportionally more children than does the urban

<sup>1</sup> N. S. B. Gras, *An Introduction to Economic History*, Harper & Brothers, Chapter VI.

<sup>2</sup> For a review of the literature pertaining to this attitude, see John Griffin Thompson, *Urbanization*, E. P. Dutton and Co., Chapter I.

population. Moreover, in the United States at least it appears that as distance from the urban center increases the number of children in the population increases.<sup>8</sup> It has been a practice for generations for the excess of population thus created in the rural sections to migrate to cities.

*The Growth and Expansion of the City*—In spite of this bias toward the city, its influence became more and more noticeable in rural districts, and cities increased in size and number. When railroads were built throughout the country and manufacturing plants developed, the old type of self-sufficiency on the farm passed away. The country population could not avoid becoming dependent in a measure upon urban people. Clothes were not made any longer by the housewife, but were manufactured in a city, or at least in a distant town. The town hatter, wagon maker, shoemaker and other artisans in the rural community found their trade slipping away because factories could perform these tasks more efficiently and the finished products could be sold by merchants in rural trade centers. Then, hand in hand with development of manufacturing, markets for farm products were created. The historical accounts of the development of livestock markets in Chicago, Kansas City and elsewhere, and of grain markets in the Twin Cities show vividly how farming changed rapidly from a self-sufficing economy to a price-and-market economy. Prices were determined not at the farm, but at distant market centers, usually located in cities. In this respect the city seemed to dominate the country, because if a farmer did not wish to accept the market price for his farm products, he could keep them. Credit and wholesale facilities also developed in urban centers and were extended to the country. Then, coinciding with these developments, urban newspapers began to make their way into farm homes. More recently, the city with characteristic financial organization and business acumen, has begun to expand into its hinterland. Chain stores and banks, a growing urban newspaper circulation in the smaller towns, and the increase in amount of freight or produce hauled by

<sup>8</sup> Edmund de S. Brunner and J. H. Kolb, *Rural Social Trends*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1933, Chapter V

trucks to and from cities are all examples of this process. Cities also became the center for cultural interests. They built libraries and art galleries and furnished the environment suitable for the growth of organizations favoring intellectual or artistic development. Even more recently the radio has provided another means for the city to extend its culture into rural districts.

To farmers and other rural residents these developments portend the complete domination of the country by urban influences. The city seemingly determines market prices and dictates what it wants. Financial policies originate there. Urban culture and urban standards of living seem to prevail regardless of their suitability to the rural environment. The ruralist finds that his circumstances of life are evaluated and interpreted not by leaders in his own group but by urban persons who grasp the meaning of country life only as it is reflected through their city experiences. Moreover, the impact of the city on the country is through a highly organized technique. The characteristic organization of urban manufacturing and merchandising enterprises is the corporation, a form of organization not commonly found in agriculture. Business and professional organizations flourish in great numbers in cities and formulate programs to promote their own interests. In the face of these, the farmer, unaccustomed to a high degree of organization, feels helpless, as indeed he is. It is only as farm organizations are perfected to the extent that they can speak authoritatively for a majority of the farmers, that the city and country groups can discuss their mutual relationships in an intelligent manner.

Yet farmers have been told numberless times that they are the backbone of the nation. No nation, it is stated, can be permanently successful with a decadent rural people, and the dependence of the city for products from the farm is obvious. Without them the city population might starve. The farmer also reads in papers and government reports that the value of agricultural products adds vast sums to the national wealth annually, and financial journals report that if agricultural regions are prosperous, business in general may expect a period of prosperity. The welfare of the country is of importance to the city,

but this fact does not always hold a prominent place in urban organization.

*Mutual Relationships of Urban and Rural Groups*—One of the most obvious of these relationships is economic interdependence. The rural group, or at least the part of it composed of farmers, produces food for cities. This rôle is of fundamental importance and cannot be omitted. A city may bring food from outside the territory in its hinterland, or even from a foreign country, but always it must come from the land. The economic justification of farms is the fact that they produce food for all the population. Other considerations may enter, but food production is a very significant one. It follows from the foregoing statements, therefore, that it behooves the farm group to produce, if possible, food stuffs for market in such amounts and qualities as will be demanded by the city population. The fact that farmers face special handicaps in this respect, such as uncertain weather conditions, insect pests, and inability to determine accurately the amount of crops that will be produced, does not greatly modify the situation. Urban people can and will consume only a given amount of food. To some extent their use of one product may be increased by skillful advertising or by other means, but in general the limit of consumption is fairly definitely set. The consumption of farm products is quite inelastic.<sup>4</sup> Farmers must find profitable methods of supplying the demand for them.

It is probable, however, that in some cases cities have not realized the mutual relationships that exist in the matter of food supply. They have taken advantage of the situation to the extent of dictating prices without considering the effects of this policy on the farm group. The growth of conflicts over prices, particularly in the case of milk, demonstrates this attitude of the city and its effects. Many so-called strikes have centered around this product, possibly because it is perishable and yet indispensable in the diet. Farmers can assert their position in milk strikes with a fair degree of success. Numerous

<sup>4</sup> R. C. Engberg, *Business Prosperity and the Farmer*, The Macmillan Company, 1927

causes for conflict arise, such as the enforcement of health ordinances, disposal of surplus milk, and the prices to be paid at various seasons of the year. City consumers do not always realize the significance of these questions. For example, it is reported in connection with a serious milk strike in Chicago, that the demand for increase in price of milk by producers followed the enforcement of an ordinance requiring that herds supplying milk to the city should be tested for tuberculosis. The desirability of this regulation is unquestioned, but it did cause great loss to milk producers. In order to offset the loss, even partially, an increase of prices was necessary. The attitude of city buyers and consumers in instances of this kind has been, perhaps, as much a matter of ignorance as of parsimony. Farmers have been unorganized and their analysis of conditions have varied. Circumstances that apply in the case of one farmer or groups of farmers do not apply in the case of others. So, in general, buyers have been inclined to pay as low a price as they could and let the matter go at that.

It is, therefore, in self-defense that milk producers around the great consuming centers like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and the Twin Cities have formed organizations. Then only, can the farmers meet buyers and consumers on an equal basis. For example, in the Detroit Milk Market each month the milk distributors meet representatives of the milk producers' association to discuss prices of milk for the following month. The meetings are informal, often open in character.<sup>5</sup> This is certainly different than haphazard methods of discussing prices. The excellent organization of the Twin City Milk Producers' Association may be cited as another example of business-like co-operation between farmers and urban buyers. The hope for harmonious relationship between producers and consumers depends upon effective, intelligent organization of both groups.

It is unfortunate that conflict situations must arise before producers and consumers realize their mutual interdependence. But when the fact of dependence does become evident, then both

<sup>5</sup> J. T. Horner, *The Detroit Milk Market*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin No. 170.

groups are ready to make agreements and find a workable solution for their difficulties. The behavior of urban and rural groups in the case of milk supply demonstrates this fact, though the same principle is applicable in other matters. After an attitude of co-operation has been established the chief cause of conflict has been eliminated, or, to state the matter differently, a basis for harmonious relationship is established.

Another influence that is destined to make the mutual relationships of country producers and town consumers more evident is the study of rural-urban trade areas. One outstanding investigation of this sort has been made by the University of Illinois. Farm production in the trade area of a fairly large city and the consumption of farm products in the city were studied for the purpose of determining the variety and amounts of products that could be grown advantageously for the local market. It is interesting to note that the recommendations based on this study suggest that more attention be given to the development of the local trade area by both dealers and producers. Dealers are urged to give information about market conditions and grades, and producers are urged to pay more attention to quality. But what seems more important from the standpoint of the present discussion is the suggestion that a joint committee be created to carry out the recommendations made.<sup>6</sup> Such a step represents a constructive way to develop harmonious and profitable relationships between urban and rural groups in connection with food supply.

A similar survey of Lansing, Michigan, presents detailed evidence to the effect that a careful study of the food supply of the city and its sources of production would probably be beneficial to both producers and consumers. City residents want a plentiful food supply at reasonable cost, while producers in the area are interested in a market. The city is a consuming center for farm products. The farming area is suitable for the pro-

<sup>6</sup> H. W. Mumford and Others, *The Development Study of a Rural-Urban Trade Area*, University of Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 326.



duction of a variety of crops.<sup>7</sup> The influence of cities on agriculture is shown by the type of agriculture which is carried on. Areas where truck farming predominates tend to exist around cities. The next area, or zone, is a dairying one. Beyond this zone a more extensive type of farming will be carried on. These relationships may be observed as one travels from one city to another. They may be verified by quantitative data as has been done by Brunner and Kolb in their study of rural social trends.<sup>8</sup>

The fact that rural people use many products made in the city constitutes another basis of interdependence. Surveys of the farmer's standard of living show that the average farm family is only about one-third self-sufficing.<sup>9</sup> Two-thirds of the goods or services used, are purchased. As previously noted, all clothing, either in the form of cloth or ready-made garments, is secured at trade centers. The same is true for furniture and household equipment, farm machinery and vehicles. Only in the case of certain food-products is the rural group independent of the city. If the rural standard of living is raised, in the sense that larger quantities of manufactured goods are used, farm people will become even more dependent upon cities and their demands for goods still more important to the business life of the city. The extent that the rural group is dependent upon the urban group for credit facilities is not definitely known, but a certain amount of dependence cannot be doubted. The largest and strongest financial institutions are located in cities and their influence extends to all parts of the trade area of these cities. For many years life insurance companies have made it a practice to loan money on farm lands. Bond issues for schools, or other improvements of a public character in rural areas, are often bought by financial institutions located in cities. As yet, branch or chain banks in town-country communities have not become general except in California. Where they do exist a definite relationship is established between the country and city. While

<sup>7</sup> C. A. School and W. O. Hedrick, *The Lansing Food Survey*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Technical Bulletin 107.

<sup>8</sup> Edmund de S. Brunner and J. H. Kolb, *Rural Social Trends*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1933, Chapter V.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter V.

the value of this relationship may be argued pro and con and must be decided by experts in finance, it seems reasonable to believe that a rural community having a chain bank would gain at least by having more credit reserve. Crop failures might seriously jeopardize the existence of a small independently owned bank, but if the same bank were a part of a larger system, the calamity of failure might be avoided. The usual objection to the plan, however, is that the community loses a certain measure of control over its financial service.

Today electric current is carried from the larger cities to the surrounding towns and farms. In some instances small towns are selling the power plants they have to larger companies, because people in these towns believe such companies can give them a cheaper and more satisfactory source of power and light. According to a report issued by the United States Census municipally owned electric and power establishments decreased from 2,581 in 1922 to 2,198 in 1927. To the extent that the smaller communities give up their electric plants and secure current from the city, a new form of dependence is created.

The migration of people to and from the city constitutes another important interrelationship. It is definitely known that a large number of people migrate from the country to the city each year. Some of these are persons with families, but a majority are young men and women who fail to find profitable employment in the country community. This migration is advantageous to cities in at least two ways. It is a source of human labor. The city with all its manufacturing and other business enterprises demands human labor and the country migrants furnish a ready supply of it. A second benefit to the city is the fact that some of these migrants bring with them a certain amount of wealth. This point was noted in Chapter III. It is only necessary to repeat that the flow of wealth from the country to the city in this way has never been measured, but it is certainly a matter of considerable importance. Generation after generation the farm must produce enough wealth to pay off the claims of those who inherit it. If the heirs receiving the money live

in cities, as many of them do, the cities benefit by the process and the country loses.

Not a great deal is known about the contributions these country migrants make to the city. Exaggerated views are expressed to the effect that without this source of population the city could not maintain itself. Professors Sorokin and Zimmerman have demonstrated by the use of available data that the city population has been able to keep its balance, that is, it has at least as many births as deaths<sup>10</sup> Moreover, it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that birth rates in cities are being rationally controlled to a marked degree. If the urban population deliberately planned to increase its birth rate, probably the objective could be realized to some extent. But in the past cities have depended upon migration from the country and immigration from foreign lands for a large part of their increase. The demand that exists for people from outside their borders is not constant but varies with the concentration of industries in urban centers. If the use of electric power becomes more feasible in manufacturing, many industries may shift to smaller cities and towns. Then the labor supply for industry would probably be drawn from nearby territory, and large metropolitan centers would be obliged to maintain their population, if possible, by natural increase.

It has been argued that persons who migrate from the country to the city are of superior ability and consequently make very significant contributions to urban life. Available data in regard to this matter do not support this generalization, however. Studies based on *Who's Who in America*, for example, indicate that rural populations do not furnish an undue proportion of migrants who are outstandingly successful. In fact, a study of the names in the 1924-25 edition of *Who's Who* shows that cities have produced proportionally more than twice as many eminent men as the rural districts,<sup>11</sup> and an earlier study indicates that

<sup>10</sup> P. A. Sorokin and C. C. Zimmerman, *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, Henry Holt and Company, page 532

<sup>11</sup> Roy H. Holmes, *A Study of the Origins of Distinguished Living Americans*, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXXIV, Jan., 1929.

farmers did not produce their share.<sup>12</sup> What studies of cityward migration do show in this connection is the fact that the quality of the migrants is very largely dependent upon the environment in which they are reared. If individuals come from a stimulating environment, they make worthwhile achievements. People from low grade communities do not achieve greatness as a rule. Capable migrants come from socially efficient communities. The study of the Belleville community in New York, made by the United States Department of Agriculture, substantiates this statement in an excellent way.<sup>13</sup> This community had a tradition for emphasis on social values. An academy was established at an early date and many young people in the community attended it. Later they left the community to go to college, to enter business, to be preachers or teachers. The list of notables includes philanthropists, research workers, governors, a United States Senator, and college presidents,—a list that is an honor to any community whether urban or rural. A more recent study of the origins and migrations of 694 farm families in Minnesota shows the same trend, though the data pertain to families rather than communities.<sup>14</sup> According to this study, when children of successful farm families migrate to cities, they make greater progress than do those from unsuccessful farm families. In all probability the environment of the successful families was more desirable.

It is thus that the mutual relationships of a social nature between country and city populations become evident. The quality of migrants to cities depends in a large measure upon the economic and social condition that is prevalent in rural communities. The city cannot expect to get "a silk purse out of a sow's ear." If it wants people who can make significant additions to city life, either in human material, food supply, expand-

<sup>12</sup> S. S. Visser, *A Study of the Place of Birth and of the Occupations of Father's Sketches in Who's Who in America*, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XXX, pages 551-557.

<sup>13</sup> Emily Hoag and C. J. Galpin, *The National Significance of a Single Farm Community*, United States Department of Agriculture Bulletin No. 984.

<sup>14</sup> C. C. Zimmerman, *The Migration to Towns and Cities*, American Journal of Sociology, Volumes XXXII and XXXIII.

ing markets, or cultural values, then it must be ready to help maintain a standard of living in rural areas that will create them. This is a significant aspect of social organization in rural-urban relationships.

*Cities and Rural Standards of Living*—One of the most fruitful ways to reach rural communities in order to develop people of high quality is through the school. Here the rural population has been handicapped—for at least two obstacles exist. One has been the lack of financial resources, the other the expense of educating surplus youths who migrate to cities. It is estimated that in 1920 the rural population had about 4,000,000 more children than an equivalent number of the city population. This fact alone is of great significance, for it means a proportionally greater expense of education. Mention has been made already of the fact that wealth tends to concentrate in the cities. In comparatively small urban areas there is taxable property or wealth in sufficient amounts to support modern schools for the community. Many country districts are not so fortunate in this respect. The country community has a smaller amount of taxable property and is faced with the problem of giving the pupils instruction under less favorable circumstances. For example, the population is more scattered. It is in recognition of this situation that laws have been passed by some states to furnish financial assistance to the poorer country school districts. Cities have looked askance at such legislation, because it means an expenditure of funds to which they contribute through taxation without, seemingly, sharing the benefits. Yet cities have an obligation in this respect, which in all fairness to rural people cannot be avoided. The determination of this responsibility in terms of dollars or in tax rates is one of the major problems in educational research.

*The Church*—This institution is an important medium through which urban and rural groups influence each other. It is evident first of all by the fact that urban churches are larger and have ministers with better training and more experience than country churches. Consequently urban influences tended to determine, for a time at least, church policies and programs that were tried

in the country. The ill effects of this influence and the problems peculiar to rural churches were not revealed until numerous surveys of churches in country communities were completed and published. Then the sacrifices these churches were making to city churches of the same denomination could not be questioned. Young ministers preached in the country church until they had experience enough to secure a city appointment. Home mission aid was sometimes spent to keep competing churches in existence. Occasionally plans of church union were not especially favored. Furthermore, courses of training for ministers did not give students an understanding of rural social conditions and of the church's relation to them. If a minister wished to acquaint himself with such facts, he would have to do so mostly on his own initiative. Fortunately, since the establishment of rural departments in home missions boards of the larger denominations, a majority of rural churches have received more attention. They are now being considered as allies of city churches rather than mere supplements to them.

The rôle of the church in rural-urban relationships is to interpret the religious and social conditions of the urban and rural groups to each other. Church leaders of city populations need to be cognizant of the general facts and trends of rural life, and country ministers, to the same degree, need to interpret the conditions and problems of city life. Each group can learn much about the other. An excellent example of church activities to familiarize these groups with one another, occurred in the city of Chicago. The chairman of the Commission on Church and Industry of the Chicago Federation of Churches with the help of the Federal Council of Churches made a study of the economic and social conditions of farmers who supplied milk to the city.<sup>15</sup> After the studies were completed all interested groups were invited to a conference in which the whole situation was considered. At the conclusion of the conference a play entitled "Milk" was given. It depicted in an effective way the problems confronting farmers who were supplying milk for city families,

<sup>15</sup> James Myers, *The Church in Rural-Urban Conflict*, Rural America, January, 1929, pages 8-10.

and the city group could see the effect of its collective action. Such events are certain to create understanding between different groups. Where human understanding exists, conflicts or injustices are likely to disappear, and programs designed to correct maladjusted living conditions of either group are likely to be more successful.

Other religious and character-forming organizations, like the Y.M.C.A. and the Boy Scouts, have a part in rural-urban relationships similar to the church. That is, they may in various ways interpret the city environment to the country and that of the country to the city. The establishment of rural departments in national organizations of this type is wholly encouraging, though the rural population may not immediately get all the benefits to be derived by these developments. Considerable modification of programs may have to be made, but such departments do furnish a medium of wholesome contact between urban and rural groups. The development of area work by the Y.M.C.A., whereby a secretary in co-operation with an urban organization works in rural territory around the city, and the districting of territory by the Boy Scout organizations will tend to create a moral influence among country boys that city communities have had for a long time.

*The City Newspaper*—As a disseminator of news events, this agency may have a great deal of influence in creating an intelligent understanding between the urban and rural parts of the population. The urban or rural dweller buys the paper in order to read the news, and any paper, therefore, fulfills its purpose to the degree that it prints news. Sometimes daily papers have been criticized because they do not print enough country news. It is questionable, however, whether this contention can be satisfactorily substantiated, because the distinguishing line between country and city is becoming very dim, especially in certain parts of the United States. Furthermore, it is difficult to say what is "country" or "rural" news as contrasted with other kinds. The farmer would care no more about reading detailed articles concerning some manufacturing plant or a store than the urban dweller cares to read detailed descriptions of farming enterprises.

Consequently, most city dailies that reach rural communities wisely print the news pertaining especially to them in a separate section of the paper. Market quotations, crop reports and related materials are of general interest; they logically find a place on the financial page. It is unreasonable to expect a large metropolitan daily paper to print news of interest only to particular communities. This material belongs to the weekly or semi-weekly paper. It frequently happens, therefore, that in cities surrounded by a rural territory, both a daily and a weekly paper will be published, the latter paper carrying news of strictly local interest.

The constructive rôle of the large city daily is to report news events that will be of interest to a majority of the reading public. Some interpretation of the news is desirable, provided it is free from bias. In this way a newspaper may help both urban and rural groups to see themselves from a collective point of view. The impetus and interpretation many city dailies have given to the farmers' co-operative movement has been thoroughly wholesome and beneficial in its effect. It is desirable for the city press to expand this sort of activity into other phases of rural life development, but it cannot do so unless the facts pertaining to rural life are made generally available. It is distinctly a duty of the research agencies dealing with rural life and farmers' organizations to discover these facts and to disseminate them. The city newspaper and no other agency can take a definite or intelligent position in regard to rural events, if rural people themselves and the agencies which represent them do not evaluate the events in a consistent manner. Newspapers now print a large amount of material given out by the Press Service of the Office of Information of the United States Department of Agriculture. They are able to give this space, which if purchased would amount to thousands of dollars annually, without charge, because the information supplied is of a reliable sort, usually based on investigations made by the Department.

*Commercial Organizations*—Urban organizations of a commercial nature may be of considerable value in helping city populations to understand rural life and its needs. A majority



of these organizations have a strictly economic approach to the problem and try to find ways of making profitable contacts with rural people. Such an objective is perfectly legitimate and can be criticized only when the dominance of the profit motive is so great that it is positively harmful. Unfortunately some business transactions emanating from urban centers have had this effect, but most organizations realize that profit must be secured by giving a genuine service to the group concerned. A stable business can be built on no other basis. Seemingly, it will not be long until every urban organization of a legitimate type will want to know as much as possible about the social conditions of rural people. Then they can adjust their programs accordingly. Their interest in this connection is a subtle, though effective force in creating an understanding between rural and urban groups.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1 What has been the characteristic attitude of rural people toward cities?
- 2 How did the growth of cities affect the manner of life in rural areas?
- 3 In what ways are rural and urban groups economically interdependent?
- 4 When economic matters are involved, why is conflict rather than co-operation likely to characterize the relationships of rural and urban groups?
- 5 Why is the maintenance of a desirable standard of living an advantage to the city as well as to the country?
- 6 What is the rôle of churches in the development of constructive rural relationships?
- 7 What contribution may the city newspaper be expected to make in the creation of an understanding between rural and urban groups?

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## CHAPTER XXI

### THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF RURAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

In previous chapters there has been no specific attempt to include data or discussion pertaining to rural life in countries other than the United States. Such a limitation is necessary for at least three reasons: (1) comparable data from many countries are not available; (2) the social conditions of rural populations in different parts of the world vary greatly; and (3) if such data and discussion were included the material would be too voluminous. Each chapter would constitute a reasonably large monograph. But international relationships have an important influence on the rural population in any country. Some of these relationships are quite obvious; others are involved. All are significant and deserve consideration. The rural population of no country can shape its policies uninfluenced by developments in international organization.

*Interrelationships in Agricultural Production*—This is a very important relationship because the primary justification of the rural (farm) population from the economic standpoint is to produce food. The rôle of farm people in this connection cannot be substituted and is a permanently necessary one. Several contacts among farmers in different countries have emerged because they are engaged in a common task. There is a mutual interest in the production of plants and animals of suitable quality. American livestock breeders have gone to other countries, especially to those in Europe and the British Isles for choice breeding stock many times. Some of our most popular breeds originated on foreign soil. Short-horn cattle came from England, the Aberdeen Angus from Scotland, the Jerseys from the Isle of Jersey. Horses have been imported from Belgium, France, and other countries. Several breeds of sheep were developed first

across the ocean. The exchange of plants from one country to another with a view of improving production is a common practice and has been profitable. For example, the development of Rosen rye by a Russian student who came to an American agricultural college has resulted in much benefit to farmers in the United States wherever this crop is grown. This rye is hardy and produces yields greater than many native varieties.

The development of agricultural production and the sciences pertaining to it are of advantage to people in all countries. Science does not necessarily respect national boundary lines, but spreads to all parts of the world as circumstances warrant. An improved practice helps all farmers, so that there is a mutual benefit in exchanging ideas and experiences. An indication of how generally this fact is recognized may be gained by noting the names of several international organizations interested in scientific agriculture. The list follows.<sup>1</sup>

International Seed Testing Association

International Commission on Agricultural Meteorology

International Association of Poultry Instructors and Investigators.

International Society of Soil Science.

International Dairy Federation.

World Dairy Congress.

Most of these organizations have been established within the last twenty-five years, so apparently the realization of international relationships along these lines is of comparatively recent origin.

It should be mentioned also, that rural people and agricultural leaders have a common problem in controlling diseases and pests that attack crops and animals. Up to the present time countries have tried to prevent the importation of infested seeds, plants or animals within their borders, but such efforts have not been entirely successful. Some diseases and noxious plants have found

<sup>1</sup> Names of these organizations occur in a list of International Organizations Interested in Agriculture, Compiled by Katherine Jacobs and mimeographed as Agricultural Economics Bibliography No. 22, United States Department of Agriculture.

their way from one country to another despite careful inspection. The time may not be far distant when some sort of information and assistance regarding the nature and control of diseases and pests that threaten to be a menace to several countries will be highly advantageous. The European corn borer has recently appeared in the United States and vast sums of money are being spent to eradicate it. If it could have been annihilated while still outside the United States, a great expenditure in time and money would have been saved.

*Interrelationships in Economic Matters*—Gradually, also, the economic aspects of agriculture from an international point of view have developed and demanded recognition. If a country produces a surplus of wheat, the surplus must be stored or marketed in another country. When marketed, it will affect the price of wheat in the importing country. If a second nation has wheat for export, a veritable network of relationships develops. World supply and demand are guiding influences in determining the price of an agricultural product. Unless the total demand is known as well as the probable amount produced, the relationship established between supply, demand and price must necessarily remain relatively indefinite. Just now in several countries the co-operative movement among farmers is developing. These co-operatives try to develop efficient marketing practices and attempt to advise farmers as well as they can about production and consumption. Unfortunately in this latter endeavor they are seriously handicapped by a lack of adequate statistics. It is therefore a hopeful sign to find that a world census of agriculture is being considered by agricultural leaders in international affairs.

These facts are not new. Rural statesmen have recognized them for a long time and have tried to secure improvements. The International Commission of Agriculture was formed in 1889 to study agricultural questions and rural economics. Several international congresses have been sponsored by this organization. More recently, through the efforts of Mr. David Lubin, an American citizen, the International Institute of Agriculture was founded at Rome, Italy, in 1905. One of the major purposes

of this organization is to collect and to publish the statistical, technical and economic information concerning agricultural products and the prices prevailing in the various markets.<sup>2</sup> Such a task is not an easy one, because it requires the co-operation of the various countries in reporting data as well as a certain amount of standardization of statistics that in some cases can be accomplished only with tremendous work. Through the efforts of the Institute, however, much progress has been made. The organization publishes a *Yearbook of Agricultural Legislation* which is a compilation of the laws pertaining to agriculture passed in all countries. The *International Yearbook of Agricultural Statistics* and the *International Review of the Science and Practice of Agriculture* are also published. Besides these publications several periodicals have appeared. One periodical, the *Monthly Bulletin of Agricultural Economics and Sociology*, emphasizes the economic and social aspects of rural life.

The collection of statistics is only one phase of the economic interrelationships existing between different countries. There is, for example, the question of establishing grades of different products in order to facilitate world trade and to create new markets. It is significant to note in this connection that in the United States during 1927, agricultural exports amounted to 39.2% of the total exports of the country and that agricultural imports constituted 53.6% of the total imports. The excess of the exports over imports was valued at \$321,942,000.<sup>3</sup> Agricultural conditions prevalent abroad have a great influence on farming conditions in this country. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the United States Department of Agriculture has made surveys of agricultural conditions in certain European countries.<sup>4</sup> At the present time, one of the major difficulties of agriculture in the United States is the fact that the export demand for agricultural produce has, in recent years, diminished to a very great extent. For example, a report issued by the Agricultural Ad-

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, page 9. A full statement of the purposes may be found in the *League of Nations Handbook of International Organizations*, Geneva, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture*, 1928, page 1015.

<sup>4</sup> The results of many of these surveys are published in bulletin form.

ministration in February, 1934, states that the carry-over of wheat alone reached nearly 400,000,000 bushels. Even though this surplus was available, several European countries increased their own production of wheat, because of tariff restrictions, the debt situation, and the desire to have a supply of their own wheat in the event that a war should occur.

But the interest of farmers in foreign agriculture may extend beyond the possibility of discovering a market. There is the opportunity to learn about helpful farm practices and new methods of farm management. Economies in using machinery under different circumstances and the relative merits of various crop rotation systems can be observed. Furthermore, the policies of different countries in regard to the uses and ownership of land, credit facilities and co-operation furnish ample reasons for a sympathetic study of foreign agriculture. The accomplishment of the Danish people in agricultural improvement and co-operation is a lesson as well as a demonstration for farmers in all countries.

*Social Interrelationships*—The realization and implications of social relationships on an international plane are just being recognized, although they have existed for a long time. It is, perhaps, logical for people to comprehend their occupational and economic interrelationships before those ordinarily designated as social come within the purview of their thinking. But now, with a vast amount of contact in the technical and economic fields, other relationships demand attention. Consequently, there have developed in recent years some international organizations to promote the social aspects of rural life. The International Country Life Commission is an important organization of this kind. The first regular meeting of the commission was held in 1926 in Belgium and the second one at Michigan State College in 1927. An idea of the objectives of this organization may be gained by noting the following statements from the proposed statutes of the commission: <sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Bulletin of the International Country Life Commission, No. 3, pages xvi and xvii.

"To discover the best means for improving the living conditions of country people. . . .

"To keep the young folks in the villages by wholesome entertainments and to beautify country places with a view to attach the peasant to the land . . .

"To federate the committees, associations, etc., existing in various countries and having a similar aim in order to make their efforts known and to let the federated groups derive profit from the ideals and methods developed by each of them . . .

"To assemble the federated associations annually or periodically in congresses or conventions . . . and to exchange views on the best means to attain their specific object . . ."

In addition to this Commission there was organized in 1923 the International Commission of Women's Institutes and more recently still an International Union for the Instruction of the Rural Population.<sup>6</sup> The names and purposes of these organizations indicate that, while rural life in any given country is in some respects unique, yet there are many social problems which are common to rural people in all parts of the world.

The place of the agricultural population in modern society is a question that goes beyond the confines of states and becomes one of deep significance for rural people in all lands. No country, however small, is without a farming population. In several countries it is the major occupational group. Circumstances will not permit farmers to remain uninfluenced by other groups. They must co-operate with the remainder of the population in securing the sort of government and living conditions desired or else be dominated by it. In Denmark the farmer co-operates, but he also votes. The methods which rural people use to get recognition of their efforts and the co-operation of other groups are subjects deserving constant observation. The exact procedure to be followed will vary to some extent in different countries, but already some significant generalizations may be made.

It appears that farmers or rural people in any country have not achieved much success in making their wants known or

<sup>6</sup> *Proceedings of the Second International Country Life Commission*, Bulletin 5, page 64



impressing their ideals on society until they have learned to co-operate among themselves on a community basis. Local community groups, if active, give members the training and viewpoint necessary for co-operation on a larger scale. The rural life movement in many countries illustrates this fact. In the United States there are the local units of the Farm Bureau, the Grange and the Farmers' Clubs. In Great Britain the community councils and Women's Institutes are organized. In Denmark there are the co-operatives, in Switzerland the Swiss Farmers' Organizations, in Germany the Society for Rural Welfare and Household Management.<sup>7</sup> Some organization to improve the economic and social aspects of rural life may be found in almost every country.

Efficient farming appears to be another condition that is associated with a progressive farm population. Whenever farmers have to toil long hours in order to get a mere existence, there is neither time nor inspiration left for self-development. If community groups can be organized, they furnish a medium through which efficient farm practices may be disseminated. The most necessary step in rural community organization in many countries is the development of organized groups that will encourage improved farming and marketing methods. However, such organizations or some others must focus the attention of people on human values. Otherwise the rural population cannot secure the balance and viewpoint necessary for effective co-operation with other groups. Either a conscious or unconscious realization of this fact has caused several farmers' organizations, whose purposes are primarily economic, to expand their activities into the field of social welfare. The American Farm Bureau Federation has developed its home and community department. The National Farmers' Union, a large farmers' organization in Great Britain, has become interested in community work. Similar trends may be observed in several other countries.

The standards of living held by rural people are a matter of international concern. In all countries they face the problem

<sup>7</sup> *International Country Life Commission*, Bulletin 6, Secretariat General, 40 Rue des Joyeuses Entrees, Louvain, Belgium

of interpreting and conserving the values in country life. The trend in society today is toward urbanization and a wholesale adoption of urban ideals of living. But these ideals may not be adapted to the rural environment. Country life has values, such as contact with nature, neighborliness, and opportunity for wholesome family life, which any society can ill afford to lose. But rural people cannot conserve these aspects of their standard of living, unless they are progressive in their thinking and develop an interest in human affairs that transcends a purely materialistic view of life. Can rural populations in the face of opposition maintain and develop such standards? This is the common problem

The major movements in international organization, therefore, logically center around the methods of maintaining high ideals in regard to living. The home, or the family, holds an important place in creating ideals, so organizations in many parts of the world have the improvement of this institution as their major objective. In the United States the principal agency, certainly on the technical aspects of housekeeping, is the extension work in home economics carried on by agricultural extension divisions of the various state agricultural colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture. In other countries similar work is being done, though in different ways. In Hungary, the association of Hungarian Women, having about 150,000 members, teaches improved methods of housekeeping. Housewives' associations are found in Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark. There are examples which show the trend. If country home-makers have an opportunity to appreciate the finer aspects of rural life, the problem of maintaining on the land a progressive rural population is much simplified. Improvement of the rural home involves, first of all, the use of modern appliances in the house so the work of housewives may be made easier and then the creation of ability on the part of families to find satisfactions and opportunities for self-expression in the rural environment. Practically all home improvement programs include this latter objective. The women who are members of the Women's Institutes in England carry on agricultural and horticultural

work, study handicrafts, and engage in numerous kinds of community activities.<sup>8</sup> The German Society for Rural Welfare and Household Management, in addition to many other activities, promotes home industry, that is, work done at home not for profit but to make the home more attractive.<sup>9</sup>

The school is a close ally of the home. There is much room for experimentation to find out the methods of teaching and the content of the curriculum that will develop an efficient rural citizenry with a love for farm life. Provision in rural communities for ample high school advantages and the establishment of the various means of adult education, including rural libraries, awaits development in most countries. In Europe there has been formed recently the International Union for Instruction of the Rural Population. The objective of this union is to encourage the instruction of rural people, principally through visual methods. Its program rests on the assumption that education, especially for adults, must be brought about as speedily as possible. Instructional methods through schools are necessarily slower, so other means of education may be developed advantageously in conjunction with the school program. The Union proposes to facilitate an exchange of stereopticon slides and other instructive material pertaining to agriculture and country life.<sup>10</sup> In the United States various programs of adult education have a similar objective, that is, they try to provide the stimulus and means of education for persons not enrolled in the school.

The development of sanitary conditions and medical services in rural districts is a matter worthy of consideration by people in all parts of the world. Experimentation with different methods in representative countries and an exchange of experiences would facilitate a solution of this problem.

The church, too, has a common task in interpreting the ideals of right living to country people. The best ways and means of

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, page 54

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, page 80

<sup>10</sup> *Proceedings of the Second International Country Life Commission*, Bulletin 5, page 167.

doing it are not certain. John Frederick Oberlin ushered in a new day for the rural church when he took charge of a little Swiss church and began to interpret religion in a new and vital way to rural folks

The migration of youth to cities is a phenomenon evident in all countries. The causes of it lie deep in our social and economic structure. As long as factories in cities demand workers and farm people produce a surplus of population a certain amount of migration appears to be inevitable. To prevent it would be futile. Without migration the rural population at its present rate of increase would be so large in a few generations that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to maintain rural living standards on as high a level as they are at present. But rural people have a part in determining the nature and character of this population drift. They face the problem of making sure, first of all, that living conditions in the country are improved and that the opportunities of farming and the advantages of rural life are brought to the attention of youth as carefully as are the advantages of the city, in order that migration to the city may not be wholly detrimental to the race.

Other questions of a social and civic nature pertain to the relationship between the rural population and the urban. Modern means of communication and transportation are bringing these two groups closer together. At present the economic relationships between cities and their hinterlands are more definitely established than are the social relationships, but the latter are as real as the former. An unhealthy condition exists when a city profits by the economic development of its hinterland and reserves the social dividends for itself. The common problem for rural and city people is to find just and equitable ways to distribute the social dividends created in the region, so that all people producing them will be benefited. The solution of this problem involves a knowledge of the contributions rural and urban populations can make to each other. When this information is available, it will be an important guide in the distribution of benefits that are created. In a measure cities are helpless in this matter until the position of farm people is made known by

dependable facts. But the rural population in nearly every country is finding a technique to interpret the circumstances of its existence to the city population. The trials of the World War showed this group its strength and importance in national economy. No longer can a country maintain the form without the practice of democracy. Either the whole population will benefit by the principles of democratic government, or no part of it will. Agricultural movements of today demonstrate this fact. They are bringing, steadily but surely, increasing social and economic opportunities to the worker on the land. If these movements are stopped or are fruitless, social chaos seems inevitable. Up to the present time agricultural reforms have been confined largely to landholding. All the agrarian revolutions today, states Irvine, "embody the principle of expropriation: the state is assumed to have power to deprive landowners of their property."<sup>11</sup> Probably the possession of land is only a prelude to the demand on the part of rural people for additional benefits enjoyed by other groups in society. The ways of securing these benefits justly is a problem confronting rural people in all countries. An exchange of experiences in these matters would help in preventing mistakes. An uninformed, but organized rural group might confer as much harm as benefit in acquiring its share of social dividends. It is a long step from a disadvantaged agriculture carried on by disadvantaged farmers to a farm population that holds its place along with other industries and groups in society. The change cannot be made suddenly, but rather must be an outgrowth of a social policy based upon scientifically determined facts. At the same time it is equally important that the rural group find effective ways of serving other groups while it is making demands of them. Democracy involves service as well as benefits.

The discussion up to this point has referred to farmers or peasants who own or rent land in large enough tracts to permit them to get a livelihood. In addition to farmers of this class there are thousands of agricultural laborers throughout the world.

<sup>11</sup> Helen Douglas Irvine, *The Making of Rural Europe*, E. P. Dutton and Co., page 204

In many respects the position of these workers is less satisfactory than that of the owners or renters. They feel the pinch of poverty more keenly and have less hope for the amelioration of their lot. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that they too are organizing to secure privileges and benefits enjoyed by other groups in society. In general their organizations have resembled those of industrial workers. Agricultural trade unions are formed according to the pattern established by union workers in industry and are usually an integral part of the trade union movement throughout any given country. This movement in agriculture is new, and its implications or its possible expansion cannot be well surmised. Numerous and special difficulties arise in connection with organization. The question of membership is a perplexing one. It is sometimes very difficult to make a distinction between a farmer and an agricultural worker. Obviously a person with a small amount of land may be both. Then there is the possibility that the interest of the worker will be so closely allied with that of the employer that workers will not choose to organize in unions to secure higher wages or other benefits.

In 1920 an International Land Workers' Federation was formed with a membership of 2,104,000 members, but in 1926 the membership was reported to be only 336,000.<sup>12</sup> It is the opinion of the persons who have studied the question, however, that the decrease in number of members does not portend a weakness of the movement, but rather that in spite of the decrease the movement has taken a firmer hold on agricultural workers. At least twelve countries, nearly all being located in Western and Central Europe, are represented now in the international organization. These organizations try to secure numerous reforms, such as regulation of hours of labor, regulation of the employment of women and children in agriculture, and higher wages. The more aggressive groups look forward to legislation which will limit the size of land holding and provide a small amount of land for each worker.

<sup>12</sup> *The Regulation and Organization of Agricultural Workers*, International Labor Office, Series K (Agriculture), No. 8, page 73

Trade unionism in agriculture has not developed in the United States, possibly because the conditions of agricultural workers are not so unsatisfactory as in certain parts of Europe. There is more opportunity here for the worker to become a renter and eventually a farm owner. Whether this condition can be maintained in the future if population increases and the supply of new lands suitable for farming diminishes, is indeed a puzzling question. There is now a rather constant and growing demand for farm workers to do hand labor. Work in sugar-beet fields, orchards and truck farms furnish the most common examples of labor demands of this type. In view of these circumstances it seems to be within the limits of reason to ask whether some time in the future the United States will witness a development of agricultural trade unionism similar to that found in Europe today.

In conclusion, it is well to add the thought that all of the interrelationships discussed in this chapter which develop friendly contacts and a feeling of unity among rural people in different countries are advantageous from the standpoint of world peace. Rural people suffer as much as any group from the ravages of war, and their efforts are indispensable at the time warfare is being carried on. Over and over again farmers were told that "food will win the war," when the conflict of the World War was at its height. But farmers are peace-loving and neighborly. Once they realize that folks in other lands are virtually their neighbors with the same hopes, joys and ideals, they will be more reluctant to support a war against them. And in most countries a program of warfare could not develop very far unless the farm group supported it.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is the development of agricultural science a matter of international interest?
2. In what ways may the agricultural activities of one country affect those of another country?
3. What is the purpose of the International Commission of Agriculture?

4. What are the principal objectives of the International Country Life Commission?
5. Describe some of the efforts that are being put forth in foreign countries to improve rural standards of living.
6. To what extent has trade unionism developed among agricultural workers?
7. What conditions would be likely to lead to trade unionism among agricultural workers in the United States?
8. What effect on world peace will the friendly relationships among farmers of different nations probably have?

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## CHAPTER XXII

### RURAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND RURAL PROGRESS

Rural social organization is definitely associated with rural progress, for through effective social organization the goals which constitute progress are attained. It is well at once to make clear the point that social progress is an abstract general concept. Man has to define progress and, consequently, whether a phenomenon is social progress or not depends upon the definition which is used to judge it. Definitions are numerous in sociological literature, for people think of progress from many different points of view. Most definitions hinge around basic social processes. Three are particularly emphasized: (1) increased use and control of nature; (2) an equitable distribution of the benefits thus derived; and (3) growth in intellectual and moral values. These statements are, of course, abstract and permit a wide variety of interpretations, but they may serve as criteria by which the trends and theories pertaining to rural life can be evaluated.

*Increased Use and Control of Nature*—Processes designed to give rural people control over the natural environment which surrounds them are basic to rural social well-being. The farmer has striven always to make nature his ally rather than his foe. Some methods of doing this were crude, even magical, but they were the best the rural dweller could conceive of at the time. A review of old superstitions about planting crops or caring for animals would illustrate how general such methods of control were. Their use was discontinued only when more effective methods were found.

The most rapid advancement in control of natural resources has come since the development of scientific agriculture. Results achieved by its use would be spectacular were it not for the fact that they are so wide spread. Science is adapted in

numerous ways in the production of both plants and animals. The modern breeds of livestock are a wonderful demonstration of what an intelligent man may do when he co-operates with nature. Equally outstanding achievements may be cited in the case of plant breeding. Now, numerous varieties of plants and fruits, unknown a generation or two ago, are produced on many farms. The protection of both plants and animals against diseases and pests is also a field in which science has been of great value. The money that has been saved by vaccination of hogs for hog cholera, to give only one example, amounts to millions of dollars. Numerous sprays are now effectively used in horticulture. Commercial fertilizers are put on the soil, and balanced rations are computed for livestock.

There is an opinion among some farmers that this phase of agriculture has been developed far enough. Farmers are producing now more products than can be marketed at a profit, they argue. Further application of science may only increase the difficulty. On the surface, this kind of reasoning may seem plausible, but in reality it is faulty. The criterion for a farmer to use in deciding whether to adopt a scientific practice or not, is its economy. If it is possible, with the aid of scientific methods, to produce three hundred bushels of potatoes on one acre at less expense than on an acre and a half or two acres, then certainly the use of scientific methods is justified. Economy of production is desirable from the standpoint of social progress. If an excess of any given product is created by efficient methods of production, then the problem is one of adjustment of supply to demand, and not a question of super-efficient production. It may be desirable to have fewer farmers, but not less efficient ones. One objective of agricultural extension departments is to encourage farmers to adopt scientific practices that are likely to be economical on their farms. In this way these departments are promoting social progress, and herein is the justification for the support of such activities by public funds. The public has an interest in, or at least is affected by, the sort of agricultural practices that are used. Poor practices are a social waste affecting in a greater or lesser degree all occupational groups.

Education of farmers in scientific farming is a continuous process, because the personnel of the farm group changes to some extent and because research studies from time to time reveal more effective methods of production. Much remains to be done in educating farmers. The agricultural experiment stations have produced a vast fund of scientific knowledge pertaining to agriculture in recent years which has not yet been incorporated into farm practice. The average production per dairy cow in the United States could probably be doubled with a reasonable use of scientific methods in the breeding and care of dairy cattle. The production of the average poultry flock is only half, or less than half, of what it would be, if poultry flocks were cared for properly. A similar lack of careful methods in other aspects of farming is found on many farms. Farm management studies show a rather wide range of income among farmers in the same community. Part of this difference is due to the fact that some farmers are better managers and employ more up-to-date methods in their farm practices.

Besides the aid of science in agricultural production, machine or electric power is being utilized on many farms. It is freeing the farmer from much labor in the fields and around the barn. This represents a utilization of natural forces. If electricity is available in the house, the farm woman, also, finds it possible to do many tasks with electric power. The physical energy thus saved may be turned into more productive channels, and in this way social progress is promoted. In several instances farmers have co-operated to get the lines for current built past their homes. The use of electricity on farms will probably increase in the future. Electric machinery has already been invented to perform many tasks farmers have to do.

*Size of the Farm Population*—At this point it is necessary to discuss the size of the farm population, because in recent years the use of machinery and labor-saving devices has tended to increase the production per farmer or farm laborer greatly above what it was under a system of farming when most of the labor was done by hand. The economic consequences of this change are many, but one is particularly significant in this connection.

Census data show that the number of farmers in this country is smaller in proportion to the total population than it ever has been, yet the total production of the principal farm crops has not materially decreased. In some cases it has steadily increased. Nor has the standard of living of the farm population declined. In the United States and probably also in other countries, it appears that there are now as many people on the land as are necessary. There may even be an excess number in certain areas. Some farms are so small that a farmer is unable to secure a suitable living. Others are in sections where an ordinary farm enterprise cannot be remunerative, because climatic conditions are unfavorable or markets are too far away.

It is impossible to tell what the optimum number of farmers in any given nation may be. Numerous circumstances will influence this relationship. It is probable the number will vary depending upon the policy a nation wishes to pursue. In the United States the Federal Government has encouraged rather consistently the settlement of medium-sized farms through homestead laws. If by appropriate means of education, legislation, and social organization, living conditions are improved in rural areas, more people may choose to stay there even though their incomes are lower than they would be in some other occupation. On the other hand, if the nation pursues a *laissez faire* policy in regard to its rural population, living standards may remain so low that many persons will leave the country and seek their fortunes in the city. Such a procedure is inimical to social progress when it causes an insufficient use of land, poor farming, or a depletion of the quality of farm people.

*Distribution of the Benefits Secured from an Increased Control Over Nature*—Problems which are associated with the distribution of benefits secured by the increased control over nature may be divided conveniently into two major groups. One group is concerned with the relationships of farmers and rural dwellers to one another, the second group deals with the relationships of farmers and rural people to the remainder of the population. Some problems and questions of social progress are so intricate that they affect both the relationships of farmers

to one another and to other groups. However, the classification just mentioned is useful in making an analysis of the subject under consideration.

Farmers have always realized that a certain amount of dependence existed between them, but the need for effective organization has been more acute in recent decades. It has become apparent that, although scientific methods are being used in agriculture, farm life still has many deficiencies. Taxes are high; marketing methods and costs are unsatisfactory; farm profits are low. Improvements are needed in the social aspects of rural life. There are still poor schools and churches and a lack of modern institutions, such as libraries and hospitals. Unless these conditions are corrected farm people cannot benefit to the fullest extent from improved farm practices.

Co-operative associations, principally have been the farmer's method of correcting problems of an economic nature. By this method they have removed some of the conditions that make agriculture unprofitable, and results show promise of being even more beneficial in the future. The growth of the co-operative movement in both Europe and America indicates that co-operation is an essential part of a progressive rural life program. One great advantage it has in modern times is that participation in co-operative associations develops among farmers and rural dwellers the habit of working together. As time goes on farmers become convinced that they benefit by working with neighbors, rather than by opposing them. They also acquire the technique and experience necessary for effective organization. Aside from any economic benefits it may have, this is the most significant aspect of the co-operative movement in its relation to social progress. Farmers are not likely to acquire the technique of organization necessary for successful co-operation and then fail to apply this experience to secure modern schools, churches and other institutions that require the combined effort of many families.

The United States Government has recognized the co-operative principle to the fullest possible extent in the recent marketing act which creates a farm board and a revolving loan fund

of several million dollars to promote the effective marketing of farm crops. The government has also made provision for the education of farmers regarding co-operative methods and principles. It would seem now that with governmental assistance developed to assist farmers in marketing their crops and with the vast system of agricultural extension education to teach them how to produce them, the way is prepared for the development of an efficient agriculture. What the result will be depends upon the farmers themselves. Will they co-operate to the extent necessary to benefit fully by the provisions the government has made? At this point the question shifts from economic considerations to questions of socialization. Economic opportunities alone will not develop this characteristic among farm people. Socialization is secured largely through the development of effective community institutions, such as schools, libraries, churches, farmers' clubs, and the like. In communities where such institutions and organizations are found the co-operative program is usually easily and successfully developed.

But while both education in scientific agriculture and co-operation may do much for the farm population, there still remains the adjustment between farmers and other groups. Some of these adjustments are primarily of a legal character and require the enactment of new laws. Others involve the creation of an intelligent public opinion. Adjustments of this kind are numerous and ever present. Three especially are worthy of consideration in connection with the second phase of social progress, namely, the distribution of the benefits derived from the increased control over nature. These adjustments pertain to: (1) land policies; (2) taxation; (3) the development and support of effective municipal services for the rural population.

*Uses of Land*—Social policies and programs pertaining to the use of land for agricultural and forestry purposes are closely related to social progress. Land is a natural resource. Questions concerning its use extend beyond the domain of any particular science and demand consideration from many points of view. Professors Ely and Morehouse state that the social ends of land utilization are: (1) a balanced production and distribution of

wealth; (2) the conservation of the natural resources; and (3) the increase in the amenities of living so far as they are dependent upon the use of the land.<sup>1</sup> These ends are comprehensive in scope and may well serve as a basis for a consideration of the subject in connection with the purposes of the present discussion. It appears from a review of land policies in the United States that the principal objective has been to get people on the land. An increase of population, it was assumed, would result in greater production, more wealth, and greater national strength. Basically this assumption may be sound, but there are some extenuating circumstances. If new lands are brought under cultivation too rapidly, the balance between production and consumption is thrown out of adjustment and an unprofitable agriculture results. The history of farming in the United States portrays this condition very well. After the Civil War the fertile lands of the Middle West and Northwest were settled rapidly. The result was a surplus quantity of farm products and low prices. Gradually, however, with increased demand for home-grown products due to the growth of cities, and an increase in export trade, the balance was partly restored and agriculture became more profitable. This condition of a relatively profitable agriculture prevailed until the outbreak of the World War. Then an unprecedented demand for farm products led to a rapid expansion of farming in nearly all possible areas. At the close of the war foreign demand decreased and a period of over-production followed. It has taken years to restore a reasonable adjustment between the uses of land and the demand for farm products, and the process is not completed yet. The most noticeable effects of such a maladjustment in agriculture are low profits in farming, city-ward migration of farmers, and the abandonment of farms in the less profitable sections. It is desirable and necessary from the standpoint of social progress to restore and maintain a relationship between production and consumption that will make farming profitable when efficient methods are used.

<sup>1</sup> R. T. Ely and E. W. Morehouse, *Elements of Land Economics*, The Macmillan Company, page 271.

One way to secure a balance between agricultural production and the consumption of farm products is to move some farm people to the city. This movement has been going on at a rapid rate since the close of the war and gradually a balance is being restored. Such a method has its weaknesses, however, because there is not the assurance that the farmers from the least desirable lands leave the farm, or that persons least suited to be successful farmers leave. The probabilities are that a general depression in agriculture, caused by over-production, results in a certain amount of migration from all farming sections and the discontinuance of farming by some persons who can best serve society and their own interests by remaining on the land. Furthermore, a rather heavy migration of rural people to the cities may cause some congestion there and an unwarranted wave of migration back to the land again as soon as farming conditions improve. Mass movements either to or from farms are undesirable.

The most favorable condition from the standpoint of social progress is a continuous movement from country to city which facilitates the removal of people from farms, who by choice or inability are not suited to farming, and the placement on farms of those individuals or families who can become capable farmers. The rôle of government would seem to be one of facilitating this process, while at the same time avoiding an undue expansion of agriculture. When comparatively small profits in farming are secured, due, seemingly, to the fact that too much is being produced, the government and states might refrain with considerable advantage from encouraging people to go on unoccupied lands. To encourage land settlement under such circumstances only makes a bad situation worse. It creates more farmers who are likely to make still lower profits, if indeed, they make any at all. The use of new lands for farming should be encouraged only when farming is profitable enough to enable the settler to make a living and eventually pay for a farm.

The foregoing statements are made from the point of view of the farm population. If within a nation, there are overcrowded cities with unemployed workers, it may be advantageous



to the people themselves and to the city to get some of the unemployed on the land. But if these settlers become successful farmers and produce great amounts of farm crops for market, they might decrease the profits in farming and eventually lower the standard of living of people already on farms. This is a question of social progress from the standpoint of the nation as a whole, rather than from the standpoint of rural people. Consequently, it does not come within the purview of the present chapter.

Turning to a consideration of the second objective of land utilization, the conservation of natural resources, a distinction between individual and social welfare becomes evident. From the standpoint of broad national policy, it is always desirable to conserve the natural fertility of the soil, but from the standpoint of the individual farmer it may be advantageous to get the greatest amount of profit from farming, regardless of its ultimate effect on the fertility of the land. If new lands are fertile, farmers are tempted to take little thought concerning soil fertility. But to deplete the soil unduly is inimical to social progress. Future generations may have to pay the penalty.

Two possible remedies for preventing the waste of soil fertility seem plausible. One is to show by experimentation that it is economical for the present generation to conserve fertility by the use of legumes, commercial fertilizers and crop rotations. Some farm management studies indicate that this is true. The following statement appearing in a bulletin issued by an agricultural experiment station is very important in this connection. "The opinion too generally prevails that soil-improvement methods are applicable mainly to poor soils, while the fact is that for a given expenditure the income per acre can frequently be increased more on good land that has been continually in grain crops and to which practically no fertilizer has been applied, than on ordinary poor land."<sup>2</sup> The recognition of this fact by farmers may have an important effect on the conservation of soil fertility.

<sup>2</sup>H. W. Mumford and Others, *The Developmental Study of a Rural-Urban Trade Area*, Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 326.

The second method of preventing undue depletion of the soil is to develop on the part of farmers a pride in caring for their farms. If both rural and urban groups adopted a persistent policy of encouraging soil conservation and approved of it in socially commendable ways, the results would be helpful. The agencies of social control may be used just as effectively in this connection as they are in securing law observance, support of churches, schools, civic activities, or any other tasks where community responsibility is involved. Logically this method should be co-ordinated with the former one in preventing wasteful practices in connection with the soil.

Aside from questions of conserving soil fertility, the use of land for different purposes is closely related to social progress. An unwise use of land is wasteful to society. At the present time some lands are being farmed that could more advantageously be used for forestry. Anyone who has ever visited some of the cut-over regions in the lake states will grasp the significance of this statement. There are farmers marooned on some of this land with no hope of making enough to enjoy a reasonable standard of living. They have poor houses, a scanty food supply, and a paucity of contacts that is extreme. It is almost impossible to develop a satisfying community life in such areas, because the means of subsistence are so meager. These circumstances suggest that a government agency on a national and state basis is needed to survey and classify the available supply of land and indicate in a general way how the different areas may be used most advantageously. Such an agency would need to work continuously because changes in population and the demand for farm and forestry products necessitate new or different uses of land.

A study of the use of land in Vermont makes specific recommendations regarding the procedure to be followed in securing an effective use of land where there is a low density of population. These recommendations are an outgrowth of careful research and are so logical that, seemingly, they have general application. Their essential points are:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> C. F. Clayton and L. J. Peet, *Land Utilization as a Basis of Economic Organization*, Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 357

1. Concentration of the population of each town or township on the land best adapted to agriculture.
2. Protection and development of forests and reforestation of areas best adapted to this purpose
3. Utilization and development of parks, game preserves, and the use of lands for hunting and fishing purposes.
4. Development of water power resources in combination with flood-control projects, rural electrification, and encouragement of local industries
5. Reorganization of local government to meet present needs.
6. Continued development of agricultural extension work in home economics and agriculture.

Private colonization companies have played an important part in getting settlers on the land. Many of these companies hold land that was formerly purchased for its timber, but now after removing the timber, the land is no longer valuable to them. Consequently, they strive to sell it and thus eliminate the expense of taxes or any other expense incurred by ownership. Their desire to do this has caused some of these companies to use salesmanship methods that are questionable in motive, if not in a legal way. The possibility of permanent settlement receives only minor consideration. Some people are induced to go to the land who are not fitted at all for the kind of a life a settler must lead. A majority of them fail. In contrast to this situation, there are several private colonization companies that carefully select settlers and assist them in numerous ways to get a start.<sup>4</sup> To prevent worthless land from being sold for farming purposes, there is much need for state supervision and control of the methods private companies use in disposing of their holdings.

The third social end of land utilization may now be considered in connection with the settlement of new areas. People must live on land. The amenities which they receive from its use depend in many respects upon the kind of social organizations that are created. In the United States the plan of having

<sup>4</sup> J D Black and L C Gray, *Land Settlement and Colonization in the Great Lakes States*, United States Department of Agriculture, Bulletin 1295.

the farmer's dwelling on the farm has been quite consistently followed. This plan probably has some economic advantages, but from the social standpoint it creates problems of social organization not found when the farm homes are clustered in a little hamlet. Obviously detailed investigation is advisable before a new tract of land is made available for settlement. There is first the question of its need. If this is established, the problem then shifts to the selection of settlers and the methods of getting them on the land. In the past, state colonization plans and private colonization methods have been used. Under the former plan the project is supervised by the state. Canada, Australia and California have used this method. Under the California plan a large tract of land is laid out in farms. Buildings are built and then sold to settlers on the basis of a long time payment plan at a low rate of interest. Settlers are carefully selected, and the number of farms so established is large enough to insure community advantages for the settlers.

Private colonization methods of settlement vary. In the past there has not been enough attention given to the selection of settlers or to the conditions which contribute to their success. Consequently, many failures have resulted. On the other hand, as has been previously noted, some companies carefully select prospective settlers and follow a systematic plan of supervision in order that they may be permanently successful. In former times the settlement of new lands was a simpler matter than it is today. Lands available for settlement were more fertile, and community advantages did not play as important a part in rural life as they do now. Formerly the development of community advantages was assumed, but at present colonization agencies cannot overlook these aspects of their work. It is obviously unwise to put a settler and his family on a tract of land that is located too far from a settled community. Even if the family succeeds in bringing the land under cultivation, they are still left without good roads, neighbors, school, churches and other community institutions essential to a permanent existence. Any plan of colonization that fails to take cognizance of community influences is not in accord with social progress, as defined

at the beginning of the chapter, and does not merit the encouragement of either public or private agencies.

*Taxation*—As in the case of the social ends of land utilization, taxation involves adjustments among farmers and other groups in society. Systems of taxation and the need of tax funds have developed with the growth of government. The practice of assessing real estate and personal property to raise revenue has been in use for a long time and has become institutionalized to a considerable extent. It became established in the United States about seventy-five years ago when the principle of a general property tax was incorporated into many state constitutions. It was assumed that land, buildings and personal property represented ability to pay and that, therefore, it was logical to levy taxes on them. This assumption was probably true at the time and still is, but circumstances have changed greatly in the last fifty years. Expenses of government have increased. People now demand many more services of government than they did formerly, and other forms of earning and possessing wealth have developed. Yet, methods of taxation have not been adjusted to these changes and the general property tax still must bear the bulk of the revenue that is received by local and state units of governments. The farmer is especially affected by these circumstances, because so much of his wealth consists of land, buildings, and various kinds of personal property. Urban residents also feel the burden of the general property tax, but apparently to a lesser degree than do farmers.<sup>5</sup> This maladjustment in taxation is the root of much dissatisfaction and is the cause of a great amount of discussion. It is a perennial subject and almost always receives consideration at meetings where rural groups gather to determine general policies.

Recent investigations in numerous states reveal a factual basis for discontent. For instance, in a study of Michigan rented farms, it was discovered during the period 1919 to 1927 that 52%

<sup>5</sup> For example, A study in Virginia reports that real estate taxes took 20 cents out of every dollar of farm rent and 16 cents out of every dollar of urban rent. Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 268.

of the average net rent from the farms was paid in taxes.<sup>6</sup> In Iowa records for an aggregate of 1,465 farms indicate that taxes amounted to 28.3% of the net rent.<sup>7</sup> In Wisconsin, where a study was made of taxes and incomes in a single county for 1924, the figures show that the average farmer spent 19% of his net income for taxes while the average city man spent 6.5% and the average village man 5.9% of their respective incomes for this purpose.<sup>8</sup> A study of 1,156 owner-operated farms in North Carolina shows the same trend regarding the farmer's income, 20.3% of it went for taxes.<sup>9</sup> These studies indicate that the farmer's complaint about high taxes is a real one and suggest in an unmistakable manner the need for a revision of the tax system. The principle of taxing incomes according to some definite plan is gaining favor rapidly with rural groups and may be expected to appear frequently in recommendations until legislation shifts some of the tax burden from general property to incomes. The attitude other groups take toward this or any other proposals necessarily will have a great deal to do with rural social progress. A more equitable method of taxation is greatly needed.

If there were not serious social consequences associated with the present tax situation, the matter might be dropped at this point with the thought that economists and tax specialists will work out a more satisfactory system. This however, is not the case, for questions of a social nature immediately arise. Excessively high taxes have a derogatory psychological effect in causing farmer groups to be unduly parsimonious in supporting those public institutions which are necessary for a high standard of living. An unwillingness on the part of rural people to build modern schools, roads, and hospitals, and to employ county

<sup>6</sup> R. Wayne Newton, *Taxes on Michigan Rented Farms*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, Technical Bulletin 91

<sup>7</sup> J. E. Brindley and Grace S. M. Zorbaugh, *The Tax System of Iowa*, Extension Division of Iowa State College, Extension Bulletin 150

<sup>8</sup> B. H. Hibbard and B. W. Allen, *Tax Burdens Compared*, Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 393

<sup>9</sup> North Carolina Tax Commission, *Farm Income and Taxation in North Carolina*, North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 267

public health nurses, county social workers, or county health officers, is accounted for in part by the fear of increasing still more a tax burden which seems excessive. A public library may be desirable, but if taxpayers in the community feel that they cannot afford it, much effort will be necessary to get them to assume this additional expense. It may be true, as has been implied frequently in previous chapters, that these expenditures for social benefits are economical and that even with high taxes, the rural population would gain by raising their taxes sufficiently to meet the expense of modern, efficient institutions. This fact, however, does not decrease the need for the adoption of methods that will make the distribution of taxes more equitable between rural and urban people and between property owners and other persons whose wealth or income is not in the form of real estate.

Both rural and urban people face the problem of an efficient use of tax funds after they are raised. This is the second problem in connection with public finance and one on which both groups are more likely to agree regarding methods of solution. Obviously the question of efficient use of tax funds involves a program of education and the development of a latent civic consciousness which is frequently lacking in both urban and rural communities. In this connection public forums of various kinds and a constructive policy of local newspapers will be effective. There are instances in rural communities where the local paper has been the initial and dominating influence in developing a constructive interest in matters pertaining to local government.

*Legislative Services*—The development and support of municipal services require legislative action and involve both rural and urban groups. Road building programs are an example of this relationship. During the last two decades a great expansion of highway improvement has taken place. Funds for this work have come in a large measure from taxes on motor vehicles and gasoline. These taxes are collected through state agencies and expenditures of the funds are supervised by them. Consequently roads have been built where they seemed to be most needed, that is, between the principal towns and cities. There can be no

question of such a need, but many farmers who live off these main arteries of travel are still confronted with the problem of traveling on an unimproved road. Their auto and gasoline taxes may go to help build a road that they seldom or never use. A calculation from the Fifteenth Census shows that 36.3% of the farms in the United States are on unimproved dirt roads and 26.1% on improved dirt roads. Only 29.8% are located on gravel or hard surface roads. Farmers are demanding some recognition of this problem and some financial assistance in the construction of roads between farms and the nearby trade centers. It has been suggested that a portion of the gasoline tax be spent in the county where it is raised. Another similar proposal provides for the use of a certain portion of the gasoline tax on township roads, regardless of where it is collected. The problem is unsettled in most states although its solution is urgent. Roads suitable for marketing farm products and for travel by automobile are essential to a progressive rural population.

Another needed adjustment in municipal services that involves legislative action is some method of reorganizing local governmental units so that people living on farms may have the benefit of public institutions. Few farmers have a center for municipal services as do urban dwellers. Their high school may be at one place, their hospital (if they support one) at another and the library center at still another. The ideal condition and the one that would most likely enhance rural social progress would be the development in rural areas of municipal districts in conjunction with trade centers large enough to offer all the services of trade, health and education that people need. In order even to approximate this result, the co-operation of inhabitants in towns or cities directly affected will be needed, as well as a favorable attitude on the part of people outside the area. Otherwise the necessary legislation may not be possible. The creation of metropolitan districts around large cities represents a recognition of mutual relationships in these places. The idea needs to be extended to rural areas with a view to mapping districts that include a major town and the smaller communities



tributary to it. Then the definition of such areas in a state or federal census would be in accord with social progress, for it would help to identify such groups and would encourage co-operation either in a voluntary or legal way.

*Growth in Intellectual and Moral Values*—This phase of rural social progress is just as important as the other phases discussed. An increased use and control of nature, or a just distribution of the benefits thus derived, do not make social progress certain. These processes must be accompanied by a growth in intellectual and moral values that will promote an effective utilization of advantages that are derived.

The development of an interest in intellectual and moral values is a duty of all agencies concerned with education and character building. It is certainly a problem of the school, but the church also has important responsibilities in this connection. In the last generation the efforts of agricultural leaders have been spent in making the means of technical education available for the rural population. In the present and future generations rural leaders will be obliged to expand their efforts and provide the means of cultural education also. Social progress cannot exist where people are unresponsive to the dominant trends of thought in their society. The farmer should know the practical aspects of plant breeding, but it is also necessary for him to be familiar with the implications of this information from the standpoint of social welfare. Otherwise he may become a technician with a social vision as narrow as the range of his activities.

Such a program makes an up-to-date school system and library facilities indispensable. By use of a library the intellectual interests of rural people may be cultivated and enriched, provided a skilled librarian can put material into the hands of readers that will be suited to their needs. The county library idea is growing, but it needs to grow faster until the services of a librarian become as general as the services of a county agricultural agent. An expansion of agricultural extension work to include the social aspects of rural life is an initial part of this program. Increasing numbers of farmers are turning their attention to matters of community development. It is logical for

them to seek guidance in these efforts from the extension divisions of the agricultural colleges

In the creation of a keen sense of moral values the church may be expected to take a prominent part, for a virile religion will necessarily emphasize desirable types of behavior. It is possible for the school to aid also in character education. But since all the influences that affect individuals help to determine their behavior, it is unwise to leave the task of moral training to one or two institutions without the assistance of other agencies of social control. It is a mistake to do so. The cultivation of an appreciation of moral values is a common duty of the church, school, the press, and the various social organizations in a community.

At the present time, when rural groups are becoming organized and are meeting other groups on a competitive as well as a co-operative basis, it is exceedingly important from the standpoint of social progress that moral standards be developed to guide them in these relationships. It would be a blot on the history of social progress for rural residents to adopt standards of behavior that are damaging to others outside of their group. An enduring rural civilization cannot be built on this basis

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the basic social processes involved in social progress?
2. In what way does the advancement of agricultural science contribute to social progress?
3. What is the distinction between efficient production and excess production? What circumstances determine each one?
4. Why is the education of farmers in scientific agriculture necessarily a continuous process?
5. List some of the circumstances which tend to determine the size of the farm population
6. How do successful co-operative marketing organizations promote social progress?
7. What farmers' characteristics contribute to the success of co-operative organizations?
8. Until recently what have been the principal objectives of land policies in the United States?

9. What are the social ends or objectives involved in land utilization?
10. What are the possible means of preventing a waste of soil fertility?
11. What are the objectives of a land utilization program in areas where there is a lack of abundant soil fertility?
12. What are the social consequences of an unjust tax system?
13. Why is growth in social and moral values essential for social progress?

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE STUDY OF RURAL LIFE

Investigation and research are indispensable in any science, and are especially urgent in a new one like rural sociology. The hypotheses and theories need to be checked and the facts about rural social organization scientifically observed. Without this, obviously no science can exist. At numerous places in this book mention has been made of the fact that more research work is needed before any definite statements can be made about some of the subjects. In a few instances the need is urgent, as certain phases of rural life have not been studied at all or only to a very limited extent. This fact is evident, perhaps, in the material presented in preceding chapters. In the following paragraphs a few problems which may be studied with considerable advantage from both practical and theoretical standpoints will be suggested.

At the present time there appears to be more information of a scientific character available concerning the rural population than there is for almost any other phase of rural life. This is due partly to the fact that census data on this topic have been collected, and partly because with the foundation and stimulus afforded by census data, numerous investigators and research workers have found it profitable to study this topic. Such circumstances are fortunate, because information about the distribution, composition and characteristics of rural people is basic to any investigation or understanding of other phases of rural life. Yet only a beginning has been made in the study of this subject. Census data apparently have not been used to the fullest extent,<sup>1</sup> and certain aspects of the population problem have not

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of further use of census data see, C. Luther Fry, *Population Projects*, Publications of the American Sociological Society, Vol. XXIII, pages 239 to 247.

been considered at all. It would be highly desirable to have the composition of the rural and farm population more fully analyzed at each census period in order to note changes and trends. The question of migration to and from farms is still largely an unexplored field. The investigation of this subject, too, needs to be continuous, for changes are apt to occur from year to year and decade to decade. An analysis of cityward migration by age, sex, occupation and, if possible, by financial and social status, would help greatly to give an insight into the favorable and unfavorable circumstances of rural life.<sup>2</sup>

Group formations in rural areas have been widely studied, as is evident by the references in Chapter IV, but there is more work to be done in this field. For example, it is important to know more fully the circumstances that are associated with the formation and disintegration of rural groups and the influence these groups have on one another. A progressive church apparently paves the way for a progressive school or vice versa, and farmers' organizations of an economic character seem to be more successful in communities where active social institutions and organizations exist. More data pertaining to the facts involved in these relationships would be of much value in rural social organization.

It would be particularly helpful to know, in connection with occupational influences, more precisely the effect modern scientific agriculture is having on the personality of farmers. The farmer of antiquity was the strong-armed, plodding, peasant type. The modern farmer works with machines, figures, and scientific facts. The influence of this change on social organization and community programs is great. It must produce different attitudes, but their character is known only in a general way. Moreover, the influences different types of farming exert on farmers and communities are not completely understood. Cotton growing apparently leaves its characteristic stamp on the people who

<sup>2</sup> An admirable beginning in this direction has been made by the Rural Life Division, Bureau of Agricultural Economics. See, *The Agricultural Situation*, Vol. XII, No. 4, and Vol. XIII, No. 4, pages 14-17

grow it<sup>3</sup> Are there distinct types of human behavior that can be attributed to the production of corn, wheat, or livestock?

The standard of living has been carefully studied by Dr. E. L. Kirkpatrick and others. The results of their efforts furnish an excellent foundation for further investigations in this field. The problem has been attacked chiefly from the angle of cost of living up to the present time, but other aspects of the subject are worthy of serious study. In addition to cost there is the question of level of living. What amounts of goods and services do families of various sizes in different periods of their development use? Standards in this respect are not well established. Then efficiency of living may be studied advantageously. How efficient are families in buying goods and services, or in using them after the purchases are made? Also, the community influences on standards of living need to come within the scope of investigations on this subject. Some goods and services that families need cannot be secured by them separately. If they are made available at all, many people must co-operate to get them. Good schools, libraries, hospitals and churches are examples of the services that must be secured by co-operative efforts. What is the size of the group and the type of organization that can most efficiently and economically provide these advantages?

In the field of health the bulk of studies made in rural areas up to the present time have dealt with an analysis of the extent and nature of diseases, health defects, and sanitary conditions. These are essential phases of the problem, and knowledge about them is necessary for programs of a practical nature. They have made clear the fact that more attention needs to be paid to health conditions in rural communities. Further study and perhaps experimentation is needed to find out how adequate medical and hospital facilities can be made available to the rural population. This is an urgent problem, for good health is absolutely essential to the well-being of people. Investigations of general health conditions will also need to be made from time to time in order to detect changes that are apt to occur.

<sup>3</sup> Rupert B. Vance, *Cotton and Human Culture*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapter X

It is evident that many aspects of rural recreation are unexplored. The changes in the use of leisure time, occasioned by the advent of the automobile, the radio and an expansion of various forms of commercialized amusements into rural areas, are not known with any degree of accuracy. They are principally matters of general observation at the present time. Then, the amount of various types of recreation that people of different age and sex groups enjoy has not yet been sufficiently investigated. Also the association between different types of recreation and other phases of community life deserves careful study. What types of recreation, for instance, most effectively stimulate initiative and self-reliance on the part of people in developing constructive programs for their communities?

In the case of dependent and neglected classes, as in health, the problem is reasonably well-established. There are dependent and neglected groups in rural society. The task of research workers in this field is to find effective methods of interpreting the needs of these people to others in the community and to discover the most economical ways to assist them. Hardly a beginning has been made on these questions. Philanthropic agencies can make a significant contribution to this aspect of rural life development by assisting in supplying personnel and finances for experiments at strategic points. Closely related to questions regarding the care of dependent persons are the circumstances under which rural laborers live and work. The employment of women and children in certain types of agriculture warrants frequent, if not continuous, investigation, in order to make known its effects on their welfare. Without this information the difficulties of developing an adequate legislative program are increased greatly. Other studies of rural labor may advantageously pertain to the source, occupational mobility, and the standard of living of farm laborers.

It is interesting to note that rural sociologists and other persons interested in rural life have given great attention to the family as a field for research. Research studies already made in rural sociology have pointed to the significance of this institution, but scientific information about many phases of family life in

the country is not at hand. This circumstance furnishes the reason and the justification for the recent interest in the subject. It appears that there is more information extant about the abnormal aspects of family life than there is about what might be designated as the normal aspects. The study of divorce rates, desertion and other similar problems furnishes proof of this statement. These phenomena have crowded themselves into the foreground and therefore have been studied. But, obviously, the circumstances of the abnormal or broken family cannot be evaluated very well unless the practices prevalent in the so-called successful or normal families are known. Herein lies the great contribution that studies of the rural family may make to our knowledge about this institution either in the rural or urban environment, for in the country the most stable type of family life is supposed to exist. A recent conference on the rural family outlined some specific projects which reflect very definitely a recognition of these considerations. The exact titles of the projects are: family composition; family integration; husband-wife relationships; other personal relationships; and family-community relationships.<sup>4</sup> A further explanation of each topic indicates that the emphasis is chiefly on the normal or the usual rather than on the unusual or spectacular types of family behavior.

A great deal of research pertaining to the rural church has been made. Much of this has been done by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, though numerous denominational groups and some agricultural experiment stations have done their share. The number of rural churches, their membership, the financial support and ministerial service they receive are known in a comparatively accurate way. There is still a scarcity of information regarding the social influences which a church, or churches, in rural communities have, as distinct from their religious values. Further points of inquiry may advantageously pertain to the methods of integrating the church program with that of other institutions in the community.

<sup>4</sup> Mimeograph report of the proceedings. (Listed in the United States Department of Agriculture Library.)



The subject of the school and education is always open for investigation, because methods of education change and the adaptation of the school curriculum to the environment of the pupil deserves continuous study. Otherwise maladjustments are apt to occur. Then there are questions of finance, training of teachers, and the formation of school districts of optimum size from the standpoint of area and school population. Other educational agencies may also come within the purview of scientific study. A search for the techniques in agricultural extension work that are most effective has begun,<sup>5</sup> but there are other phases of adult education to investigate. The rôle of the rural library in the intellectual development of the community is not definitely known, and the circumstances that enhance or retard effective library service are fertile fields for investigation. Also the influence of the newspaper and the radio may be studied, particularly from the standpoint of making their educational influence more effective.

In rural government there are numerous research projects that may be outlined, for the sociological aspects of this subject have been investigated only to a limited extent. The effects of different kinds of legislation and changes in the services of different units of government constitute a valuable field for research. Information of this kind helps to furnish a foundation for legislative measures. Then, in addition to these topics the relationship between private and governmental responsibility in various programs of health welfare and education is a subject worthy of investigation. The methods of financing different services of government are a perennial problem and may be clarified greatly by the collection and analysis of data pertaining to this phase of governmental activity.

The subject of rural social organization is an inclusive one, and numerous projects may be outlined in connection with it. Only two are mentioned at this point. It is very desirable in all kinds of community development programs to know what relationships exist between the different kinds of organized com-

<sup>5</sup> M. C. Wilson, *Extension Methods and Their Relative Effectiveness*, United States Department of Agriculture, Technical Bulletin 106.

munity activities. All important activities, it appears, have to develop together, or at least reasonably near together. If one is advanced out of proportion to the others, it is apt to meet with failure, and then a long program of readjustment follows. Modern school programs are probably most successful if there is a progressive church and a farmers' organization in the community. But, as suggested earlier, the relationships involved have not been thoroughly investigated. The second project in connection with rural social organization pertains to the integration of the efforts of different groups. Numerous services of modern life cannot be secured by small units of population working independently. Co-operation of two or more groups, often involving different communities, is necessary. The methods of eliciting this co-operation and the form of organization to use in making it effective are not definitely known.

In the case of town and country relationships, there is still a lack of information that will show in a detailed or a reasonably exact way the interdependencies of towns and their rural territory, or the most effective methods that may be used to encourage and maintain co-operation between town and country dwellers. There are several approaches to this problem because it reaches various phases of community life. Economic, occupational, social and sometimes legislative matters are involved. Similar statements apply almost equally well to rural-urban relationships, for neither city nor country people know, except in a general way, their points of mutual dependence and influence. Extensive studies of the most effective methods of securing co-operation between these two major groups in the population have not been made. Too frequently conflicting situations arise and conflict ensues for a period of time. Then some tolerable form of co-operation is accepted.

The chief aim and problems of study in the field of international relationships of rural life center around the collection and interpretation of facts of sociological significance. The International Institute of Agriculture and the various international organizations sponsoring rural life interests have worked toward this objective. Under present circumstances it seems

logical to assume that such efforts are the most important from the standpoint of these agencies. Detailed and specialized studies must necessarily be left to appropriate agencies in the various countries. Only the assembling and interpretation of information thus derived can be done advantageously by international organizations now.

*Levels of Study*—The ways of studying rural life vary in scientific validity from the level of casual observation to a very careful and detailed study of some phenomenon which seems worthy of so much consideration. Casual observation is very general in scope and so unsystematic that it cannot be considered as scientific at all. This method may be useful in formulating opinion and possibly may help to test an hypothesis made at random, but it can go no further in establishing an understanding of rural life.

The next level of study from the standpoint of scientific validity may be characterized as the method of the novelist. The novelist observes rural life, usually in a particular community, from its seemingly significant aspects and then describes the picture as he sees it. In recent years some noteworthy books pertaining to rural life have been written by novelists. The advantages of this method of study consist chiefly in the fact that rural life can be painted in its reality. The reader sees exactly how different characters live and work, and if the description is vivid, he comes to understand the hopes, aspirations, sorrows and ideals of the various characters. These are truly important advantages, and, from the standpoint of completeness, they set a standard of excellence that the social scientist may well strive to attain. The weakness of studying rural life at this level is the fact that the material must necessarily be presented as the writer sees and evaluates it. Therefore, it tends to be subjective rather than objective in nature. This is a fundamental limitation of such studies. Yet they are helpful because the author explains carefully what he sees, and the description has the advantage of bringing complex situations clearly into view. It may suggest important topics for study in a more objective manner.

Investigation is a more scientific method of study than that of the novelist, because the investigator, presumably, deals with objective facts. Studies of this type imply that a problem has been observed and that the facts concerning it are important. Much of the material pertaining to rural life has been secured at this level. Such studies are valuable in a social science, because there are always situations that need to be clarified by dependable data. The collection of data regarding the prevalence of disease, absence from school, the number of organizations in a community and other similar topics probably falls in the category of investigation. Sometimes, however, such studies tend to become research projects, for the line of distinction between investigation and research is not always clear. When a study, in addition to supplying data for a particular problem, produces new facts from which generalizations may be verified or developed it may be classified as research.

Projects that are of a strictly research nature represent a study of rural life at the deepest level from the standpoint of scientific analysis. The objective is to secure new facts which may be useful in testing old generalizations or in developing new ones regardless of their immediate practical value. Any science is aided by studies of this character. The greater their number, the more rapidly will the science advance. But in rural sociology, probably a majority of the projects will be executed in a manner that will characterize them as investigations rather than research studies. This is true because many agencies responsible for the study of rural life are interested primarily in the practical aspects of it. Later a greater portion of the studies may be of the research type.

*Methods of Study*—Methods used in the study of rural life are commonly characterized as the survey method, the statistical method, the case study method, and, recently, the life study method. These methods are named somewhat in the order of their occurrence, but a newer one in no sense supersedes those antecedent to it. All have their proper place in the study of rural life. There is no one best method in the sense that research work will be more successful with it than with any

other. After a project has been selected, the investigator will probably find some particular method more helpful than any other, although at different points in the development of a single project various methods may be used.

The value of the survey method consists in the fact that data which are pertinent to a problem may be secured, usually by use of a schedule. In most cases the information asked for is obtained by interviewing the informant. Sometimes, however, the schedule is sent through the mail, but this latter method is not satisfactory in the majority of studies. A great deal of the information about rural life has been secured by surveys of various kinds. The most general type of survey is the so-called community survey. Data are collected about all the significant aspects of community life, such as the number of people, health, economic activities, and others. The facts thus derived are assembled with the hope that they will give a cross-section view of the community. In this respect such studies are often a necessary prelude to other surveys of a more specialized nature. The value of the general survey consists in the fact that it makes possible a comprehensive view of the community. Its major limitation consists in the fact that the collection and compilation of large amounts of data are necessary. Especially is this true if the study is detailed and intensive. The degree of intensiveness must necessarily be left to the judgment of persons in charge, who know its purposes as well as the limitations of funds and personnel.

The specialized type of survey has come into use as people have sought information about institutions and organizations that is more detailed than general community surveys give. Surveys of social organizations, business conditions and health facilities have become numerous. Such studies are making available a large amount of rather specialized information concerning rural life. As they increase in number there is need from time to time for a synthetic type of survey that will show how the specialized activities in a community may be integrated with one another.

The statistical method involves the use of data according to

certain well-defined techniques. Either data from surveys or from collections of material already made can be used. The only requirement is that they shall be in quantitative form and be reliable. Then if the figures are sufficiently representative, trends and relationships may be discovered and a basis for a limited prediction established. It is this advantage in the use of statistics that has caused the method to be popular with investigators in recent years. After numerous surveys of communities were completed it was necessary to make certain generalizations from the data collected. The statistical method furnished dependable means of securing a basis for these generalizations. Due to these advantages the use of statistics is indispensable in the development of rural sociology.

Nevertheless there are limitations of the method which should be noted. It can deal only with quantitative facts about individuals and groups. Births, deaths, marriages, memberships in organizations and numerous other aspects of life fall in this category. But some other facts which seem equally significant cannot be so expressed. They must be considered in a different manner. It would be desirable, for example, to state the value of an up-to-date church program in a numerical way if it could be done. Since this is not possible, other methods of description are necessary.

Limitations of statistics in social research have favored the development of the case study method. When this method is used, some unit for investigation, such as an individual, a church or a community, is observed intensively from many angles, and information of all kinds that pertains to the object of study is collected. Then a coherent explanation on the basis of the facts secured is made. Thus it is evident that the case study method has the advantage of inclusiveness which the statistical method lacks. On the other hand, no generalizations can be made concerning the relationships found in a case study, since only one unit is involved. Other units must be studied to find out if the relationship occurs repeatedly.<sup>6</sup> This is the chief limitation of

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of this point see, G. A. Lundberg, *Methods of Social Research*, Longmans Green & Co., Chapter VIII

the case study method. Its value consists in the fact that it is inclusive in scope and is likely to reveal problems for study, probably with the statistical method, which are pertinent to a more complete understanding of human behavior.

The life study method is much like case study, except for the fact that the object being investigated is observed for a longer period of time, perhaps through its whole life cycle.<sup>7</sup> Adherents of the life study method believe it is necessary to understand life in its organic unity and that this unity cannot be known by an investigation of isolated parts of the whole life process. Use of the statistical method is not discouraged, but recognizing its limitations, investigators who use the life study method, supplement and complete the statistical information with other forms of description. These ideas are in brief the views of the late Dr. C. H. Cooley concerning the life study method. Their importance for research in rural sociology is apparently just being realized. In the life study method there is a fusion to a certain extent of the techniques in other methods, and all useful means of accurate description are employed. The desirability of information thus derived and its value in the development of a science cannot be questioned. From certain points of view other ways of studying social phenomena are antecedent to the life study method.

It is well to re-emphasize the point that there is no one method which is superior to the others. All have their proper place in the study of rural life. The science of rural sociology is developed whenever a fact can be observed accurately, and, if the same fact is observed or discovered by different methods, its validity is the more securely established. Intensive analysis of the various phases of rural life and the development of dependable generalizations are both necessary for the growth and usefulness of the subject. In a certain sense the two processes go hand in hand. Results of intensive and detailed analysis furnish material from which generalizations can be made and

<sup>7</sup> C. H. Cooley, *The Life Study Method as Applied to Rural Social Research*, Publications of the American Sociological Society, Vol. XXIII, pages 248-254.

generalizations are an aid in the selection of projects for detailed study.

Dependable facts about rural life have a practical as well as a theoretical value. The time is at hand when the work of rural sociologists may supplement advantageously such assistance as rural people themselves can give. Specialists have neither time nor funds to study all the problems worthy of investigation. Assistance is needed, and it seems logical to believe that the groups most benefited by these studies should be the most willing to help make them. Probably the assistance of rural residents will consist first in co-operation with investigators. Numerous records of individual and group behavior in rural communities can be made if the residents will co-operate in recording the proper data. Information thus secured may have much practical value for the communities involved and can be used in the study of theoretical problems as well. Precedent for this kind of co-operation is already established. Farmers now keep records on dairy cows, make experiments with fertilizers, and assist in other ways to develop a science of agriculture. There is no fundamental reason why they cannot assist in the development of a science of rural life.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What principal facts about the rural population may be secured from the United States Census?
2. List two or more important research projects dealing with the formation and relationships of groups.
3. What aspects of the rural standard of living need to be investigated?
4. Why does the rural family afford a particularly fruitful field for sociological research?
5. What sociological aspects of rural government may be studied?
6. Describe the different levels of study which may be utilized in investigation or research.
7. Give the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods of research.



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